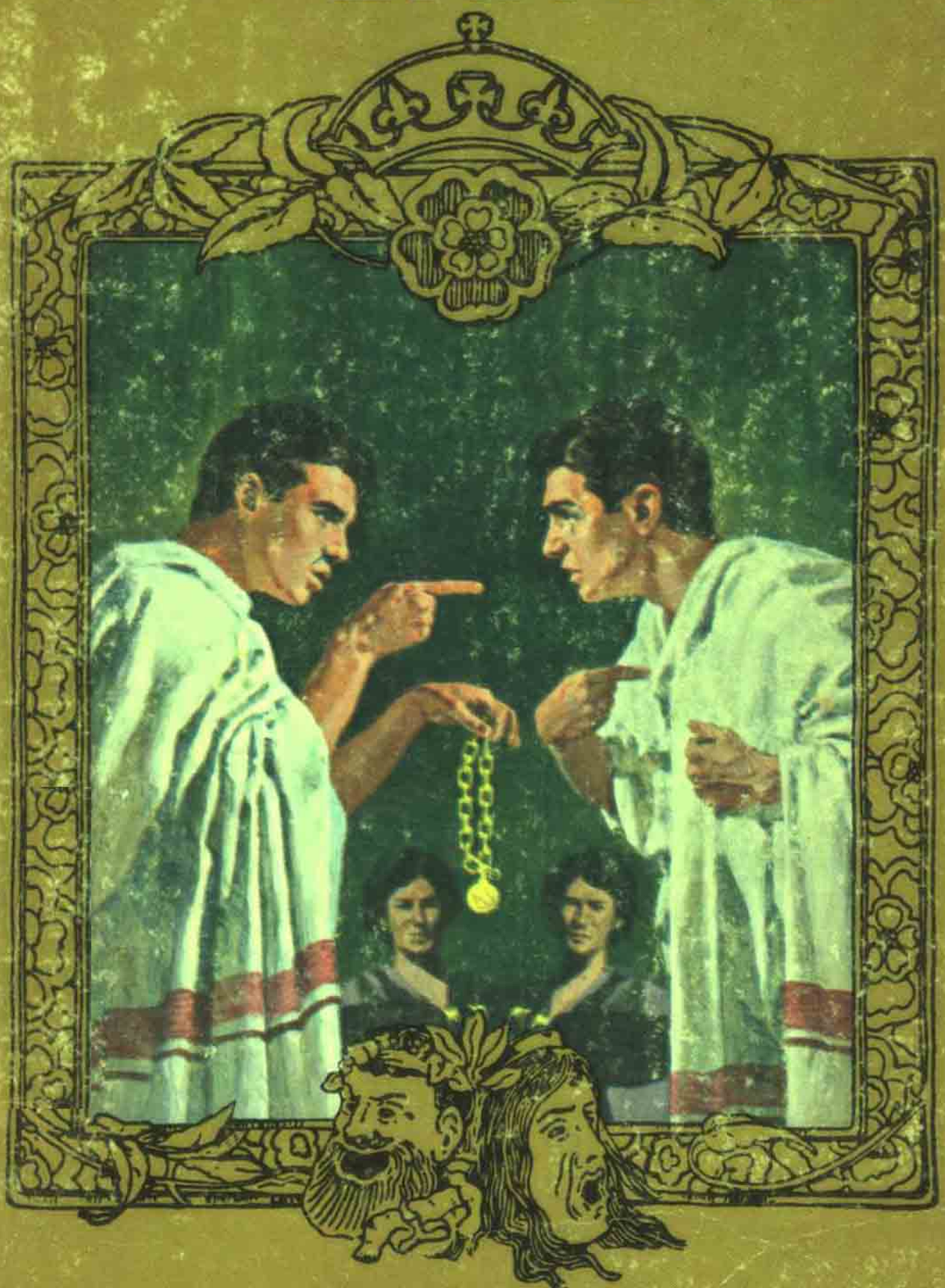
CLASSICS SERIES S23 AIRMONT 60c

William Shakespeare

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS



William Shakespeare

TO THE READER

THIS FIGURE, THAT THOU HERE SEEST PUT,
IT WAS FOR GENTLE SHAKESPEARE CUT;
WHEREIN THE GRAVER HAD A STRIFE
WITH NATURE, TO OUT-DO THE LIFE:
O, COULD HE BUT HAVE DRAWN HIS WIT
AS WELL IN BRASS, AS HE HATH HIT
HIS FACE; THE PRINT WOULD THEN SURPASS
ALL, THAT WAS EVER WRIT IN BRASS.
BUT, SINCE HE CANNOT, READER, LOOK,
NOT ON HIS PICTURE, BUT HIS BOOK.

BEN: JONSON.

The Mediaeval view of man was generally not an exalted one. It saw him as more or less depraved, fallen from Grace as a result of Adam's sin; and the things of this world as of little value in terms of his salvation. Natural life was thought of mainly as a preparation for man's entry into Eternity. But Renaissance thought soon began to rehabilitate man and nature. Without denying man's need for Grace, men came gradually to accept the idea that there were "goods," values, "innocent delights" to be had in the world here and now. Man himself was seen no longer as wholly vile and depraved, incapable even of desiring goodness, but rather as Shakespeare saw him in *Hamlet*:

> *"What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason!*
> *how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how*
> *express and admirable! in action how like an angel!*
> *in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world!*
> *the paragon of animals!"*

It was, indeed, a very stirring time to be alive in. It was a time like spring, when promise, opportunity, challenge, and growth appeared where none had been dreamed of before. Perhaps this is why there is so much poetry of springtime in the age of Shakespeare.

Edited with Introduction and Suggestions for Study by O. H. Rudzik

Notes Edited by Lucy Mabry Fitzpatrick

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AIRMONT SHAKESPEARE CLASSICS SERIES

The Comedy of Errors

By

William Shakespeare

General Introduction by Dr. David G. Pitt

AIRMONT PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.
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from the immortal literature of the world

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PREFACE

For the Airmont series of plays by William Shakespeare, we have chosen a text that we believe more nearly preserves the flavor of the old Shakespearean English than do those of more modernized versions.

In a popular-priced paperback edition, it is almost impossible to include a complete compilation of notes because of the limitations of the format. We suggest that the reader refer to the following excellent textbooks for additional material: The New Variorum (Cambridge and Arden editions); the Globe edition edited by W. G. Clark and W. A. Wright (1866); the Oxford edition edited by W. J. Craig (1891); and the editions by G. L. Kittredge (1936). Also, the following books will be helpful to a better understanding of Shakespeare: Harley Granville-Barker, *Prefaces to Shakespeare, First Series* (London, 1933); Gerald Sanders, *A Shakespeare Primer* (New York and Toronto, 1945); J. Dover Wilson, *The Essential Shakespeare* (London, 1930; New York, 1932).

Dr. David G. Pitt received his B.A. degree from Mt. Allison University in New Brunswick, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Toronto. Since 1949, he has been in the English Department of Memorial University of Newfoundland and Professor of English there since 1962. His publications include articles on literary and educational subjects, and editorial work on Shakespeare.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare: His Life, Times, and Theatre

HIS LIFE

The world's greatest poet and playwright, often called the greatest Englishman, was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, in the year 1564. The exact date of his birth is uncertain, but an entry in the *Stratford Parish Register* gives his baptismal date as April 26. Since children were usually baptized two or three days after birth, it is reasonable to assume that he was born on or about April 23—an appropriate day, being the feast of St. George, the patron saint of England.

His father, John Shakespeare, was a glover and dealer in wool and farm products, who had moved to Stratford from Snitterfield, four miles distant, some time before 1552. During his early years in Stratford his business prospered, enabling him to acquire substantial property, including several houses, and to take his place among the more considerable citizens of the town. In 1557 he married Mary, daughter of Robert Arden, a wealthy landowner of Wilmcote, not far from Stratford. Two daughters were born to them before William's birth—Joan, baptized in 1558, and Margaret, baptized in 1562—but both died in infancy. William was thus their third child, though the eldest of those who survived infancy. After him were born Gilbert (1566), another Joan (1569), Anne (1571), Richard (1574), and Edmund (1580).

Very little is positively known (though much is conjectured) about Shakespeare's boyhood and education. We know that for some years after William's birth his father's rise in Stratford society and municipal affairs continued. Many local offices came to him in rapid succession: ale-

taster, burgess (a kind of constable), assessor of fines, chamberlain (town treasurer), high bailiff (a kind of magistrate), alderman (town councilor), and chief alderman in 1571. As the son of a man of such eminence in Stratford, Shakespeare undoubtedly attended the local Grammar School. This he was entitled to do free of charge, his father being a town councilor. No records of the school are extant, so that we do not know how good a pupil he was nor what subjects he studied. It is probable that he covered the usual Elizabethan curriculum: an "A B C book," the catechism in Latin and English, Latin grammar, the translation of Latin authors, and perhaps some Greek grammar and translation as well. But family circumstances appear to have curtailed his formal education before it was complete, for shortly before William reached his fourteenth birthday his father's rising fortunes abruptly passed their zenith.

Although we do not know all the facts, it is apparent that about the year 1578, having gone heavily into debt, John Shakespeare lost two large farms inherited by his wife from her father. Thereafter, he was involved in a series of lawsuits, and lost his post on the Stratford town council. Matters got steadily worse for him, until finally, in 1586, he was declared a bankrupt. But by this time the future poet-dramatist was already a family man himself.

In 1582, in the midst of his father's legal and financial crises—and perhaps because of them—Shakespeare married Anne, daughter of Richard Hathaway (recently deceased) of the village of Shottery near Stratford. The *Episcopal Register* for the Diocese of Worcester contains their marriage record, dated November 28, 1582; he was then in his eighteenth year and his wife in her twenty-sixth. On May 26 of the following year the *Stratford Parish Register* recorded the baptism of their first child, Susanna; and on February 2, 1585, the baptism of a twin son and daughter named Hamnet and Judith.

These facts are all that are known of Shakespeare's early life. How he supported his family, whether he took up some trade or profession, how long he continued to live in Stratford, we do not know for certain. Tradition and conjecture

have bestowed on him many interim occupations between his marriage and his appearance in London in the early fifteen-nineties: printer, dyer, traveling-player, butcher, soldier, apothecary, thief—it reads like a children's augury-rhyme (when buttons or cherry-stones are read to learn one's fate). Perhaps only the last-named "pursuit" requires some explanation. According to several accounts, one of them appearing in the first *Life* of Shakespeare by Nicholas Rowe (1709), Shakespeare fell into bad company some time after his marriage, and on several occasions stole deer from the park of Sir Thomas Lucy, a substantial gentleman of Charlecote, near Stratford. According to Rowe:

> For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him . . . and was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire, for some time, and shelter himself in London.

The story has been repeated in varying forms by most subsequent biographers, but its authenticity is doubted by many who repeat it.

Another much more attractive story, which, however, if true, does not necessarily deny the authenticity of Rowe's, is that Shakespeare during the so-called "lost years" was a schoolmaster. This, indeed, appears to be somewhat better substantiated. John Aubrey, seventeenth-century biographer and antiquary, in his *Brief Lives* (1681), declares that he had learned from a theatrical manager, whose father had known Shakespeare, that the dramatist "had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country." This may, then, account, in part at least, for the years between his marriage and his arrival in London about the year 1591. It is interesting to note that in two of his early plays Shakespeare includes a schoolmaster among his characters: Holofernes of *Love's Labour's Lost* and Pinch of *The Comedy of Errors*. But let us hope that neither is intended to be Shakespeare's portrait of himself!

However he may have occupied himself in the interim, we know that by 1592 he was already a budding actor and play-

wright in London. In that year Robert Greene in his autobiographical pamphlet *A Groatsworth of Wit*, referring to the young actors and menders of old plays who were, it seemed to him, gaining undeserved glory from the labours of their betters (both by acting their plays and by rewriting them), wrote as follows:

> Yes trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers heart, wrapt in a Players hyde, supposes he is as well able to bombast out blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shakescene in a countrey.

"Shakescene" is clearly Shakespeare. The phrase "upstart Crow" probably refers to his country origins and his lack of university education. "Beautified with our feathers" probably means that he uses the older playwrights' words for his own aggrandisement either in plays in which he acts or in those he writes himself. "Tygers heart wrapped in a Players hyde" is a parody of a line in III *Henry VI*, one of the earliest plays ascribed to Shakespeare. And the Latin phrase *Johannes factotum*, meaning Jack-of-all-trades, suggests that he was at this time engaged in all sorts of theatrical jobs: actor, poet, playwright, and perhaps manager as well.

Greene died shortly after making this scurrilous attack on the young upstart from Stratford, and so escaped the resentment of those he had insulted. But Henry Chettle, himself a minor dramatist, who had prepared Greene's manuscript for the printer, in his *Kind-Harts Dreame* (1592), apologized to Shakespeare for his share in the offence:

> I am as sory as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because my selfe have seene his demeanor no lesse civill, than he excelent in the qualitie he professes: Besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approoves his Art.

Thus, in a very indirect manner and because of an attack upon him by an irascible dying man, we learn that Shakespeare

at this time was in fact held in high regard by "divers of worship," that is, by many of high birth, as an upright, honest young man of pleasant manners and manifest skill as actor, poet, and playwright.

Although Shakespeare by 1593 had written, or written parts of, some five or six plays (I, II, and III *Henry VI*, *Richard III*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and perhaps *Titus Andronicus*), it was as a non-dramatic poet that he first appeared in print. *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, long narrative poems, both bearing Shakespeare's name, were published in 1593 and 1594 respectively. But thereafter for the next twenty years he wrote almost nothing but drama. In his early period, 1591 to 1596, in addition to the plays named above, he wrote *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard II*, and *King John*. Then followed his great middle period, 1596 to 1600, during which he wrote both comedies and history-plays: *The Merchant of Venice*, I and II *Henry IV*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*. The period of his great tragedies and the so-called "dark comedies" followed (1600-1608): *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Coriolanus*. The last phase of his career as dramatist, 1608 to 1613, sometimes called "the period of the romances," produced *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, parts of *Henry VIII*, and perhaps parts of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Many other plays were ascribed to him, but it is doubtful that he had a hand in any but those we have named. Long before his death in 1616 his name held such magic for the public that merely to print it on the title page of any play assured its popular acclaim. The "upstart Crow" had come a long way since 1592.

He had come a long way, too, from the economic straits that may well have driven him to London many years before. We know, for example, from the records of tax assessments that by 1596 Shakespeare was already fairly

well-to-do. This is further borne out by his purchasing in the following year a substantial house known as New Place and an acre of land in Stratford for £60, a sizable sum in those days. In 1602 he made a further purchase of 107 acres at Stratford for £320, and a cottage and more land behind his estate at New Place. But his life during this time was not quite unclouded. His only son, Hamnet, died in 1596 at the age of eleven years, his father in 1601, and his mother in 1608. All three were buried in Stratford. More happily he saw, in 1607, the marriage of his daughter Susanna to Dr. John Hall, an eminent physician of Stratford, and, in the following year, the baptism of his granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall.

Shakespeare's retirement to Stratford appears to have been gradual, but by 1613, if not earlier, he seems to have settled there, though he still went up to London occasionally. Of the last months of his life we know little. We do know that in February, 1616, his second daughter, Judith, married Thomas Quiney. We know that on March 25, apparently already ill, Shakespeare revised and signed his will, among other bequests leaving to his wife his "second best bed with the furniture." A month later he was dead, dying on his fifty-second birthday, April 23, 1616. He was buried in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church, Stratford, on April 26.

HIS TIMES

Shakespeare lived during the English Renaissance, that age of transition that links the Mediaeval and the Modern world. Inheriting the rich traditions of the Middle Ages in art, learning, religion, and politics, rediscovering the great legacies of classical culture, the men of the Renaissance went on to new and magnificent achievements in every phase of human endeavour. No other period in history saw such varied and prolific development and expansion. And the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603), Shakespeare's age, was the High Renaissance in England.

Development and expansion—these are the watchwords of the age, and they apply to every aspect of life, thought, and activity. The universe grew in immensity as men gradually

abandoned the old Ptolemaic view of a finite, earth-centered universe, accepting the enormous intellectual challenge of the illimitable cosmos of Copernicus' theory and Galileo's telescope. The earth enlarged, too, as more of its surface was discovered and charted by explorers following the lead of Columbus, Cabot, Magellan, and Vespucci. England itself expanded as explorers and colonizers, such as Frobisher, Davis, Gilbert, Raleigh, Grenville, Drake, and others, carried the English flag into many distant lands and seas; as English trade and commerce expanded with the opening of new markets and new sources of supply; as English sea power grew to protect the trading routes and fend off rivals, particularly Spain, the defeat of whose Invincible Armada in 1588 greatly advanced English national pride at home, and power and prestige abroad.

The world of ideas changed and expanded, too. The rediscovery and reinterpretation of the classics, with their broad and humane view of life, gave a new direction and impetus to secular education. During the Middle Ages theology had dominated education, but now the language, literature, and philosophy of the ancient world, the practical arts of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and training in morals, manners, and gymnastics assumed the major roles in both school and university—in other words, an education that fitted one for life in the world here and now replaced one that looked rather to the life hereafter. Not that the spiritual culture of man was neglected. Indeed, it took on a new significance, for as life in this world acquired new meaning and value, religion assumed new functions, and new vitality to perform them, as the bond between the Creator and a new kind of creation.

It was, of course, the old creation—man and nature—but it was undergoing great changes. Some of these we have already seen, but the greatest was in man's conception of himself and his place in nature. The Mediaeval view of man was generally not an exalted one. It saw him as more or less depraved, fallen from Grace as a result of Adam's sin; and the things of this world, which was also "fallen," as of little value in terms of his salvation. Natural life was thought of

mainly as a preparation for man's entry into Eternity. But Renaissance thought soon began to rehabilitate man, nature, and the things of this life. Without denying man's need for Grace and the value of the means of salvation provided by the Church, men came gradually to accept the idea that there were "goods," values, "innocent delights" to be had in the world here and now, and that God had given them for man to enjoy. Man himself was seen no longer as wholly vile and depraved, incapable even of desiring goodness, but rather as Shakespeare saw him in *Hamlet:*

> What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!

And this is the conception of man that permeates Elizabethan thought and literature. It does not mean that man is incorruptible, immune to moral weakness and folly. Shakespeare has his villains, cowards, and fools. But man is none of these by nature; they are distortions of the true form of man. Nature framed him for greatness, endowed him with vast capacities for knowledge, achievement, and delight, and with aspirations that may take him to the stars. "O brave new world, That has such people in 't!"

The chief object of man's aspiring mind is now the natural world, whose "wondrous architecture," says Marlowe's Tamburlaine, our souls strive ceaselessly to comprehend, "Still climbing after knowledge infinite." Hamlet, too, speaks of "this goodly frame, the earth . . . this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire." No longer the ruins of a fallen paradise and the devil's, nature is seen as man's to possess, her beauty and wonder to be sought after and enjoyed, her energies to be controlled and used—as Bacon expressed it, "for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate."

It was, indeed, a very stirring time to be alive in. New vistas were breaking upon the human mind and imagination

everywhere. It was a time like spring, when promise, opportunity, challenge and growth appeared where none had been dreamed of before. Perhaps this is why there is so much poetry of springtime in the age of Shakespeare.

HIS THEATRE

There were many theatres, or playhouses, in Shakespeare's London. The first was built in 1576 by James Burbage and was called the *Theatre*. It was built like an arena, with a movable platform at one end, and had no seats in the pit, but had benches in the galleries that surrounded it. It was built of wood, and cost about £200. Other famous playhouses of Shakespeare's time, for the most part similarly constructed, included the Curtain, the Bull, the Rose, the Swan, the Fortune, and, most famous of them all, the Globe. It was built in 1599 by the sons of James Burbage, and it was here that most of Shakespeare's plays were performed. Since more is known about the Globe than most of the others, I shall use it as the basis of the brief account that follows of the Elizabethan playhouse.

As its name suggests, the Globe was a circular structure (the second Globe, built in 1614 after the first burned down, was octagonal), and was open to the sky, somewhat like a modern football or baseball stadium, though much smaller. It had three tiers of galleries surrounding the central "yard" or pit, and a narrow roof over the top gallery. But most interesting from our viewpoint was the stage—or rather *stages*—which was very different from that of most modern theatres. These have the familiar "picture-frame" stage: a raised platform at one end of the auditorium, framed by curtains and footlights, and viewed only from the front like a picture. Shakespeare's stage was very different.

The main stage, or *apron* as it was called, jutted well out into the pit, and did not extend all the way across from side to side. There was an area on either side for patrons to sit or stand in, so that actors performing on the apron could be viewed from three sides instead of one. In addition, there was an inner stage, a narrow rectangular recess let into the

wall behind the main stage. When not in use it could be closed by a curtain drawn across in front; when open it could be used for interior scenes, arbor scenes, tomb and anteroom scenes and the like. On either side of this inner stage were doors through which the main stage was entered. Besides the inner and outer stages, there were no fewer than four other areas where the action of the play, or parts of it, might be performed. Immediately above the inner stage, and corresponding to it in size and shape, was another room with its front exposed. This was the upper stage, and was used for upstairs scenes, or for storage when not otherwise in use. In front of this was a narrow railed gallery, which could be used for balcony scenes, or ones requiring the walls of a castle or the ramparts of a fortress. On either side of it and on the same level was a window-stage, so-called because it consisted of a small balcony enclosed by windows that opened on hinges. This permitted actors to stand inside and speak from the open windows to others on the main stage below. In all, it was a very versatile multiple stage and gave the dramatist and producer much more freedom in staging than most modern theatres afford. It is interesting to note that some of the new theatres today have revived certain of the features of the Elizabethan stage.

Very little in the way of scenery and backdrops was used. The dramatist's words and the imagination of the audience supplied the lack of scenery. No special lighting effects were possible since plays were performed in the daylight that streamed in through the unroofed top of the three-tiered enclosure that was the playhouse. Usually a few standard stage props were on hand: trestles and boards to form a table, benches and chairs, flagons, an altar, artificial trees, weapons, a man's severed head, and a few other items. Costumes were usually elaborate and gorgeous, though no attempt was made to reproduce the dress of the time and place portrayed in the play.

Play production in Shakespeare's time was clearly very different from that of ours, but we need have no doubts about the audience's response to what they saw and heard on stage. They came, they saw, and the dramatist conquered.

for they kept coming back for more and more. And despite the opposition that the theatre encountered from Puritans and others, who thought it the instrument of Satan, the theatre in Shakespeare's time flourished as one of the supreme glories of a glorious age.

—DAVID G. PITT
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INTRODUCTION TO
The Comedy of Errors

TEXT AND SOURCES

Seven years after Shakespeare's death, two of his friends and colleagues in the theater published a commemorative collected edition of his dramatic works, the Folio. *The Comedy of Errors* was printed here for the first time as the fifth play in the opening section, that of the comedies. The text is a good one with few obscurities; where errors do occur in the text they are of the sort that can readily be accounted for as printer's slip-ups. The one textual peculiarity is the way character names are inconsistently applied. This has led to the surmise that what the printer had to work from were Shakespeare's "foul papers," the dramatist's own working manuscript before a more polished copy was copied out for the cast and prompter. The play, however late its publication, is one of Shakespeare's earliest comedies, perhaps his first piece of comic theater. The earliest record of performance dates from December of 1594 when the play was presented at Gray's Inn to student lawyers as part of their Christmas revels. The writing of it was probably not much earlier, although dates as early as 1589 have been suggested on the strength of supposed topical references of the play.

But as to the earliness of this play among Shakespeare's works—even in the list of his comedies—one does not need external documentation. The clear and close, though never directly imitative, use of classical source material; the relative straightforwardness of the comic action; the capable but as yet not surprisingly imaginative handling of language and verse and imagery—all suggest an early stage in the development of Shakespeare's dramatic art. However, the only excuse for considering *The Comedy of Errors* a dramatic lightweight is in contrast to what came after it. In a frame of reference that includes—just to limit ourselves to comedy—*As You Like*

It, Twelfth Night, and *The Tempest,* this early play might well seem merely an extended farce, a piece of lightness. But in its own right, in the craftmanship it reveals, in the easy skill of its handling, it demonstrates that Shakespeare was already an accomplished dramatic author. There are signs in it pointing to the later and poetically more resonant works; shipwreck and illusion, here begun with comedy and pathos, will one day, at the end of Shakespeare's career, lead to the gravity and serene harmonies of *The Tempest.* But even in the matter of this early comedy we can profitably detect Shakespeare's methods. Perhaps the very fact that the final result is less intense than the later plays gives us an easier working demonstration of how and to what end Shakespeare took subjects and situations to work them up for himself.

Comedy has never reached the dignity, nor the restraints and ascribed responsibilities of its senior relative, the tragedy. There were rules and still more rules for achieving the tragic. Aristotle had offered some advice on what he thought to be the essence of tragedy and this definition became the rule for later ages. Chaucer has one of his Canterbury pilgrims recite a long list of tragedies and hammer home, with good medieval theory, what tragedy should be. Sidney, in his *Defence of Poesy,* insisted on high dignity for the tragic, to make tyrants fearful and spectators awestruck. To be funny, however, was something different. True, there were moral responsibilities even in making people laugh; ideally they should laugh at vice and folly and thereby scorn it in themselves. Still, the first—and constant—thing was to make them laugh. In such a demanding situation, one could return to past examples; what worked once might still be serviceable. And this is what we find Shakespeare, as a young dramatist, doing. He goes back to the body of comic material that had survived the collapse of the Roman world, and that by his time, had entered directly into the reading of anyone with claims to literacy. Greek tragedy was still a mystery and Aristotle's *Poetics* a law book with few successful practical applications. But Latin comedy had become a very real part of the Renaissance nostalgia and, in this case, enjoyment of an otherwise distant classical world.

Shakespeare turned thus to a comedy by Plautus, *The Menaechmi,* a quickly paced farce based on mistaken identi-

ties. Identical twins—the one searching in a foreign city for his long-lost twin brother and repeatedly being mistaken for him—provide the gist and essence of the situation from which comic mileage is extracted. Around this pair move in comic complication some of the conventionalized figures of the Roman comedy: the irate and suspicious wife and the amorously energetic courtesan (more emphatic in Plautus' action than the wife—here Shakespeare exactly reversed the Roman weighting). The fawning parasite and the old man (father-in-law to the confused hero) Shakespeare did not find necessary to include. All the plot elements are there in *The Menaechmi*, to be carried over, for their farcical qualities, into Shakespeare's play. But they are blended with two other distinctive "borrowings," from Plautus again and from the Bible. Each of these reinforces changes of tone and emphasis and event that Shakespeare works into *The Menaechmi* material as it comes to rest in *The Comedy of Errors*. The effect of these changes is twofold. The first is to increase the complications of the mistaken identities, to intensify the ingenuity of the twists and turns of plot. The second is to build on the reactions of the characters who act out the confusion. The confusion itself takes on a weird and mysterious look, so that the illusion is both farcical and fearful. Shakespeare thus builds on the Roman farce in two ways; by complicating the confusions and by exploring their implications of tone and mood. We will examine each in turn; the putting of the two together will give us a good notion of the dramatic resources and values of this comedy.

THE COMIC ELEMENT

Repetition is one of the standard and perennially safe ways to achieve a comic result. Any act or gesture or word repeated often enough has its meaning sapped and all that remains is the recurrent, now pointless, sound or movement. And our response tends to be laughter, perhaps at the very pointlessness. Or, in less general terms, if a thing is funny, its repeat should be twice as funny. Twins mistaken for each other produce comedy; why then not add another pair of twins, twin servants to match the twin masters?

From another play by Plautus, *Amphitruo*, Shakespeare

picked up one of his play's central situations: the irate husband locked out of his home while his wife entertains his double for him. The Roman play is sexually nastier—the deception is deliberate, it is an efficient way for Jupiter to get at a woman by assuming her husband's looks. To guard the gate Jupiter puts Mercury in the guise of the husband's slave. Notice how Shakespeare takes over this episode and grafts it to his original source. The wrong husband is an innocently bewildered twin, not a Roman god sexually slumming. The Shakespearean comedy gives us Syracusan Antipholus amazed at his dinner and making passes at his supposed "sister-in-law" with results dismaying to both of them. And the second doubled figure from *Amphitruo*, the Mercury-servant, expands into the entire play. Two slaves, identical twins, more than double the possibilities of mistaken identities. The Antipholi brothers are a mirror to each other and so are the Dromios. Their predicaments reflect each other as well. While the master woos a dismayed Luciana with courtly rhetoric, the frantic servant is tackled much more directly by an amorous kitchen wench. Antipholus is finally freed of a sister-in-law when he discovers his brother; Dromio is equally relieved to have Nell become only his "sister" when he finds his brother.

The identical servants are perhaps most important as the solid basis for two elementary sorts of comic effect, simple and yet constant in their appeal. It is they who are the occasions of slapstick, visual and verbal. The sight gag is still much with us, for although the concrete image of the pratfall may change, from Chaplin and the Keystone Kops to the television comic, the knock-about and the chase are always funny. The Dromio brothers help add to the confusion of wrong messages to the wrong people wrongly executed, and it is they who are always the butts of things going wrong. The one master asks for his money and gets a dinner invitation; the other asks for money for bail and gets a rope. The Dromios always get a drubbing. The wise-cracking demands more historical imagination from us. We no longer handle verbal exuberance as enthusiastically as did the Elizabethans, and one of their fondest resources, the pun, is to us almost automatically suspect. Still we can respond without all that much effort:

Dromio's geographical fantasies on the fearful Nell, hotly if wrongly in pursuit of him, show how the wise-crack can mount to the strains of its own delight. These devices of comic business and verbal sally Shakespeare did not put off as he wrote more and more plays. They were too good theater to be scrapped, especially when the audience had healthy appetites for being entertained at the playhouse. He simply managed his resources with increasing mastery. Here, in the early play, they stand more on their own, as their own justification.

The device of the second set of twins taken over from *Amphitruo* has, then, this direct benefit of more complication, more wise-cracking, more confusion; the play's hurry and pile-up of cross-purposes make it the skillful farce the audience enjoys. But the Dromios have an equally important indirect role to perform structurally. By their assuming upon themselves the most obvious consequences of error—its inherently funny aspect—they leave the other twins, the Antipholi, free to be tackled in another way. Mistakes are frequently funny, both in origin and result. But their origins may also be less than entirely comic and their results, at least to those participating in their confusion, bewildering. This is to look at the errors from another angle, not so much now at the situation itself, but at those who make the situation or who are enmeshed in it. This is to consider the moods of the play and of those who make it up.

THE GROWTH OF CHARACTER AND MOOD

The most direct way to come at this new element—new in that Plautus does not allow for it in his comedies—is to notice how the twins may *look* identical but are not the same. For Plautus they were merely chess pieces to play a game of errors. For Shakespeare there are the beginnings of a distinction between the two brothers. Their situation is the same: one of confusion. But their reactions are not the same and in this difference the comedy begins to broaden and become more subtle at the same time.

The Ephesian Antipholus is, of the two, the one closest to his origin in Plautus. He is the irritable man who, when confronted by the puzzling, gets angry—quickly and fulsomely. Shut out of his own dinner, embarrassed further by witnesses

to his lock-out, he instantly drops the politeness of the moment before when he was involved in the rhetoric of courtesy with his business colleagues. He is going to kick in the door to show everybody who is master. Only his friends' pleas to avoid further public disgrace get him away. And even so, he will assert himself, if only by punishing his wife by giving her present to the courtesan where he can always find dinner. How comically appropriate that this gold chain should turn out to be his punishment—and that his servant should hand him a rope in its place. And since his anger is too easy and too full, he will be treated as if it were indeed irrational. It must be driven out of him, and out of his servant who is also the victim of illusions. Both have been deluded, and as their would-be therapist puts it:

> Mistress, both man and master is possess'd,
> I know it by their pale and deadly looks;
> They must be bound and laid in some dark room.

Thus is the cure an ironically appropriate remedy to the irascibility.

Antipholus of Ephesus is "possessed" by his ready anger. His twin is fearful of the real thing, of Ephesus into which he has strayed and of which he has heard ominous reports:

> They say this town is full of cozenage,
> As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
> Dark-working sorcerers that change the minds,
> Soul-killing witches that deform the body . . .

The "immigrant" Antipholus is constantly presented with strange blessings: a wife and dinner, a gold chain, familiarity by the townsfolk. All these confirm his increasing suspicion of mischief abroad. And we are given a man who is prone to respond to the strange not with instant anger, as does his unknown brother, but with growing uneasiness. He is a character entirely alien to Plautus, for whom good things are to be enjoyed no matter what their source. To give Antipholus of Syracuse a proper context we have to consider Shakespeare's second "borrowing."

For Ephesian Antipholus the dinner lock-out (and for the play, the second twin) came out of *Amphitruo*. But Ephesus

itself—to give Syracusan Antipholus his occasion for bemused wonder and frightened enchantment—came out of a non-classical source. For Shakespeare has shifted Plautus' geographical locale. Instead of the tonally irrelevant Plautine setting of Epidamnum, Shakespeare has another Greek town but one more appropriate for his purposes. Ephesus had its own place in the memory of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. In the Acts of the Apostles (Chapter XIX) and in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, the city had established a reputation for its strong associations with witchcraft and "curious arts." It is these associations that provide Antipholus of Syracuse with a badly needed key to all the uncanny occurrences.

We have then a different sort of comedy coloring the play, one best approached through the ironies developed. One brother encounters frustration, loss of dinner and valuable possessions; these injustices are enough, one would think, to drive him mad—and so do all consider him. The other brother has a shower of gifts and favors, but fears the madness under them. The only way to right and settle the confusion is to dispel the angers of one brother, and the injustices he finds, and the fears of the other brother, with the illusions he cannot understand. The agent of this enlightenment, it is important to notice, is the abbess. Its appropriate context is the temple and its sanctuary.

The witchcraft that occurs as a constant note in the play serves not only to distinguish, temperamentally and imaginatively, the one Antipholus from the other. It also provides a tonality to the drama; it gives, if only with light touches, a context to the comedy that is itself not comical. The abbess establishes an appropriate religious mood to bring the confusions to a halt. Her presence dispels the fear of demons for one brother and the fear of commitment as a lunatic for the other and brings them together in a way that amounts to a religious celebration. The consequences of error are righted and the illusions give way to the happiness of discovery, brother of brother. But the abbess represents more. She happily turns out to be Aegeon's long-lost wife. In this way the origins of the errors are righted too. The play's beginnings had, after all, been a long catalogue of an old man's misfortunes and a decreed execution.

What we find in this earliest of Shakespeare's comedies is more than just the comic if we are to take this term narrowly as synonymous with the laughable. The events leading to the comedy are not in themselves funny; they and the initial situation are pathetic. The confusions of the comic events, too, are more than just amusing. The acts and gestures and words of the two sisters and the two Antipholi individualize them and give them at least the beginnings of characteristic qualities. The events thus elicit and are founded on character traits; and both the characters and events help create a mood or atmosphere that produces the final impression of the play. It is this total impression of *The Comedy of Errors*, to which all the elements discussed contribute—the events, the characters, the tonalities—that makes it characteristically a comedy as Shakespeare was to develop the form. Even in this first of the comedies what emerges from all the confusions and errors is the "brave new world" rising out of error corrected and confusion dispelled. What began as a Plautine farce, achieves as its end a restoration and an enveloping harmony, which goes beyond the slapstick of the source.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

B. O. Bonazza, *Shakespeare's Early Comedies: a Structural Analysis* (1966)

J. R. Brown and B. Harris (eds.), *Early Shakespeare*, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies 3, (1961)

W. Corrigan (ed.), *Comedy: Meaning and Form* (1965)

R. A. Foakes (ed.), *The Comedy of Errors*, The Arden Edition (1962)

L. Lerner (ed.), *Shakespeare's Comedies* (1967)

N. Rabkin (ed.), *Approaches to Shakespeare* (1964)

E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's Early Comedies* (1965)

STUDY QUESTIONS

ACT ONE

1. Discuss carefully the effect established by the opening scene in terms of its:
   a) necessary exposition.
   b) atmosphere and emotional tone.
2. What sorts of contrast does the second scene provide to the first, and for what purposes?
3. Indicate what characterizations are being built up for Antipholus and Dromio in the second scene.

ACT TWO

1. What information can we draw as to Ephesian Antipholus' ity in this act?
2. Illustrate the word-play (such as punning) as a comic element in the speeches of the two Dromios in this act.
3. Give a clear account of Syracusan Antipholus' state of mind and his motives for accepting Adriana's invitation to dinner.

ACT THREE

1. What information can we draw as to Ephesan Antipholus' character from:
   a) his conversation with his friends.
   b) his reaction to being locked out of his house.
2. What do Luciana's responses to her dinner guest's wooing tell us about her?
3. How do the love adventures of the Syracusans dramatically reinforce each other?
4. Why is Antipholus of Syracuse so concerned with a quick departure from Ephesus?

ACT FOUR

1. Explain exactly the legal situation involving Antipholus of Ephesus at the beginning of this act.
2. What is Adriana's reaction to Luciana's report of her "husband?" How does this fit in with what we already know of her?
3. How does Antipholus of Syracuse explain to himself all the good fortune coming his way and how does he react to it? (Compare your answer to that given for question four on act three).
4. How do the Syracusans deal with the courtesan and why?
5. Give the evidence offered for Ephesian Antipholus' madness. What is assumed to be its cause and its probable cure?
6. What legal nicety does Ephesian Antipholus use to try to avoid confinement for madness?
7. Discuss the climax of comic misunderstanding at the end of this act.

ACT FIVE

1. Detail the causes that drive the Syracusans to take refuge in the abbey. What is the nature of the protection they seek?
2. Discuss the causes and the analysis of the husband's supposed madness elicited from the exchange between the abbess and Adriana? What is the effect of Luciana's interjection?
3. What do Adriana's insistence to the abbess and her pleas to the duke indicate about her?
4. Detail the comic complications that issue out of the entry of the Ephesian twins.
5. Why is Aegeon's plea to the wrong son introduced at this point in the dramatic action?
6. Illustrate the dramatic efficiency of the resolution of all the accumulated misunderstandings and conclusions.

7. How are the love adventures of the Syracusans resolved? Why do the two Dromios have the last word?

GENERAL

1. Discuss the variety of comic effects presented dramatically. Consider action, spectacle, verbal play.
2. Distinguish clearly the non-comic elements in the play and indicate what dramatic function these have. Consider particularly the pathetic and the supernatural.
3. What elements or implications of characterization are offered for the Antipholus twins and for the two sisters? Discuss the dramatic role of these touches of personality.
4. With the aid of a comprehensive historical dictionary, discuss the meanings for the play of:
   a) melancholy (I.2)
   b) merry humour (II.2)
   c) plain dealer (II.2)
   d) Conjurer (IV.4)
   e) genius (V.1)
5. Describe the varieties of dramatic rhetoric used in the play (prose, blank verse, couplets, quatrains) and suggest the dramatic appropriateness of each.
6. Develop a meaningful context for each of the following, showing the importance of the idea and/or the imagery to the development of the play:
   a) I to the world am like a drop of water
      That in the ocean seeks another drop,
      Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,
      (Unseen, inquisitive) confounds himself.
   b) For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall
      A drop of water in the breaking gulf,
      And take unmingled thence that drop again
      Without addition or diminishing,
      As take from me thyself, and not me too.
   c) The fellow is distract, and so am I,
      And here we wander in illusions—
      Some blessed power deliver us hence.

d) A mere anatomy, a mountebank,
A thread-bare juggler and fortune-teller,
A needy-hollow-ey'd-sharp-looking-wretch;
A living dead man.

e) Methinks you are my glass, and not my brother:
I see by you I am a sweet-fac'd youth,
Will you walk in to see their gossiping?

The Comedy of Errors

ACT 1

WHILE TRAVELING, Aegeon, an elderly merchant, has been condemned to death at Ephesus, a city which is hostile to his home city of Syracuse. He explains his presence in enemy territory to the Duke of Ephesus as the outcome of a long series of amazing misfortunes. Twenty-five years ago at Epidamnus, his wife had borne him twins and a poor woman at the same inn had sold him her own twins as attendants for his children. As the group voyaged back to Syracuse, their ship foundered. The parents tied the children and their attendants to the mast and themselves to either end of it, but the mast was split in two by a rock just as two ships approached. One ship rescued Aegeon, one son and one slave, while the other ship picked up Aegeon's wife, the other son and the other slave. Thus the family was divided in half. When the son who was rescued with the father reached the age of eighteen, he left home taking his slave with him on a search for his missing twin brother. Both children were called Antipholus. Both slaves were called Dromio. Two years passed and the father set out to look for his two sons. His travels have taken five years up to his arrest now at Ephesus. The Duke pities the merchant, but cannot go back on his edict; he can only give the old man until evening to try to raise ransom.

Antipholus of Syracuse, the son who was raised with his father, has also just arrived at Ephesus with his slave, Dromio. A friendly merchant warns him of danger, telling him that that same day one Syracusan has already been condemned. Dromio is sent off to their inn to put their money in safekeeping while his master views the city. Antipholus is accosted, however, by Dromio of Ephesus, who mistakes Antipholus for his Ephesian master, Antipholus' twin brother, and summons him home for dinner where his wife is impatiently waiting for him. Antipholus, believing that the slave is his own servant, takes Dromio's message as a bad joke and gives him a good pummeling. The slave will not admit to having deposited the money given to him and Antipholus fears Ephesus is "full of cozenage," frauds and witches. He will go to check at the inn himself.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A hall in the DUKE'S *palace.*

Enter DUKE, AEGEON, GAOLER, OFFICERS, *and other* ATTENDANTS.

AEGEON.

Proceed, Solinus, to procure my fall,
And by the doom[1] of death end woes and all.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Merchant of Syracusa, plead no more;
I am not partial [2] to infringe our laws:
The enmity and discord which of late
Sprung from the rancorous outrage of your duke
To merchants, our well-dealing countrymen,—
Who, wanting guilders[3] to redeem their lives,
Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their bloods,
Excludes all pity from our threat'ning looks.
For, since the mortal and intestine jars[4]
'Twixt thy seditious[5] countrymen and us,
It hath in solemn synods been decreed,
Both by the Syracusians[6] and ourselves,
To admit no traffic to our adverse towns:
Nay, more, if any born at Ephesus
Be seen at Syracusian marts and fairs;
Again, if any Syracusian born
Come to the bay of Ephesus, he dies,
His goods confiscate[7] to the duke's dispose;[8]
Unless a thousand marks be levied,
To quit[9] the penalty and to ransom him.
Thy substance, valued at the highest rate,
Cannot amount unto a hundred marks;
Therefore by law thou art condemn'd to die.

---

[1] **doom:** decree. [2] **partial:** inclined. [3] **guilders:** used as money here, of no particular country. [4] **intestine jars:** internal quarrels. [5] **seditious:** quarrelsome. [6] **Syracusians:** Syracusans. [7] **confiscate:** confiscated. [8] **dispose:** disposal. [9] **quit:** pay off.

AEGEON.

Yet this my comfort,—when your words are done,
My woes end likewise with the evening sun.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Well, Syracusian, say, in brief,[1] the cause
Why thou departed'st from thy native home,
And for what cause thou camest to Ephesus.

AEGEON.

A heavier task could not have been imposed
Than I to speak my griefs unspeakable:
Yet, that the world may witness that my end
Was wrought by nature,[2] not by vile offence,
I'll utter what my sorrow gives me leave.[3]
In Syracusa was I born; and wed
Unto a woman, happy but[4] for me,
And by me too, had not our hap[5] been bad.
With her I lived in joy; our wealth increased
By prosperous voyages I often made
To Epidamnum;[6] till my factor's[7] death,
And the great care of goods at random left,[8]
Drew me from kind embracements of my spouse:
From whom my absence was not six months old,
Before herself—almost at fainting under
The pleasing punishment that women bear—
Had made provision for her following me,
And soon and safe arrived where I was.
There had she not been long but she became
A joyful mother of two goodly sons;
And, which was strange, the one so like the other
As could not be distinguish'd but by names.
That very hour, and in the self-same inn,
A meaner[9] woman was delivered
Of such a burden, male twins, both alike:

---

[1] **in brief:** briefly. [2] **wrought by nature:** caused by natural behavior; that is, by natural affection for his son. [3] **what . . . leave:** as much as I can say without giving way to a show of grief. [4] **but:** only. [5] **hap:** fortune. [6] **Epidamnum:** Epidamnus, now Durazzo, in Albania. [7] **factor's:** agent's. [8] **at random left:** left unheeded. [9] **meaner:** of lower rank.

Those, for their parents were exceeding poor,
I bought, and brought up to attend [1] my sons.
My wife, not meanly[2] proud of two such boys,
Made daily motions[3] for our home return:[4]
Unwilling I agreed. Alas, too soon
We came aboard!
A league from Epidamnum had we sail'd,
Before the always-wind-obeying deep
Gave any tragic instance[5] of our harm:
But longer did we not retain much hope;
For what obscured light the heavens did grant
Did but convey unto our fearful [6] minds
A doubtful [7] warrant of immediate death;
Which though myself would gladly have embraced
Yet the incessant weepings of my wife,
Weeping before for what she saw must come,
And piteous plainings[8] of the pretty babes,
That mourn'd for fashion,[9] ignorant[10] what to fear,
Forced me to seek delays for them and me.
And this it was,—for other means was none:—
The sailors sought for safety by our boat,
And left the ship, then sinking-ripe,[11] to us:
My wife, more careful for the latter-born,
Had fasten'd him unto a small spare mast,
Such as seafaring men provide for storms;
To him one of the other twins was bound,
Whilst I had been like heedful of the other:
The children thus disposed, my wife and I,
Fixing our eyes on whom[12] our care was fixt,
Fasten'd ourselves at either end the mast;
And floating straight,[13] obedient to the stream,
Was carried towards Corinth, as we thought.
At length the sun, gazing upon the earth,

---

[1] **attend:** wait on. [2] **meanly:** moderately. [3] **motions:** proposals. [4] **home return:** return home. [5] **instance:** indication. [6] **fearful:** frightened. [7] **doubtful:** certain. [8] **plainings:** complainings. [9] **for fashion:** to copy their elders. [10] **ignorant:** not knowing. [11] **sinking-ripe:** on the verge of sinking. [12] **on whom:** on the child on whom. [13] **straight:** at once.

Dispersed those vapours[1] that offended us;
And, by the benefit of his wished [2] light,
The seas waxt[3] calm, and we discovered
Two ships from far making amain[4] to us,
Of Corinth that, of Epidaurus this:
But ere they came,—O, let me say no more!
Gather the sequel by that[5] went before.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Nay, forward, old man; do not break off so;
For we may pity, though not pardon thee.

AEGEON.

O, had the gods done so, I had not now
Worthily term'd them merciless to us!
For, ere the ships could meet by twice five leagues,
We were encounter'd by a mighty rock;
Which being violently borne upon,
Our helpful [6] ship was splitted in the midst;
So that, in this unjust divorce of us,
Fortune had left to both of us alike
What to delight in, what to sorrow for.
Her part, poor soul! seeming as burdened
With lesser weight, but not with lesser woe,
Was carried with more speed before the wind;
And in our sight they three were taken up
By fishermen of Corinth, as we thought.
At length, another ship had seized on us;
And, knowing whom it was their hap[7] to save,
Gave healthful [8] welcome to their shipwrackt guests;
And would have reft the fishers of their prey,[9]
Had not their bark been very slow of sail,
And therefore homeward did they bend their course.—

---

[1] **vapours:** clouds. [2] **wished:** wished for; desired. [3] **waxt:** grew. [4] **making amain:** coming at full speed. [5] **that:** what. [6] **helpful:** helpless. [7] **hap:** chance; luck. [8] **healthful:** salutary. [9] **would . . . prey:** that is, would have overtaken the fishermen and rescued his wife and the two children.

Thus have you heard me sever'd from my bliss;
That by misfortunes was my life prolong'd,
To tell sad stories of my own mishaps.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

And, for the sake of them thou sorrowest for,
Do me the favour to dilate at full [1]
What have befall'n of them and thee till now.

AEGEON.

My youngest boy, and yet my eldest care,
At eighteen years became inquisitive
After his brother; and importuned me
That his attendant—so his case was like,[2]
Reft of his brother, but retain'd his name—
Might bear him company in the quest of him:
Whom whilst I labour'd of a love to see,
I hazarded the loss of whom[3] I loved
Five summers have I spent in furthest Greece,
Roaming clean[4] through the bounds of Asia,
And, coasting homeward, came to Ephesus;
Hopeless to find,[5] yet loth to leave unsought
Or that, or[6] any place that harbours men.
But here must end the story of my life;
And happy were I in my timely[7] death,
Could all my travels warrant me[8] they live.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Hapless Aegeon, whom the fates have markt
To bear the extremity of dire mishap!
Now, trust me, were it not against our laws,
Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,—
Which princes, would they,[9] may not disannul,—[10]
My soul should sue as advocate for thee.
But, though thou art adjudged to the death,
And passed sentence may not be recall'd

---

[1] **dilate at full:** describe fully. [2] **so his case was like:** since his case was the same. [3] **whom:** he whom. [4] **clean:** entirely. [5] **Hopeless to find:** without any hope of finding. [6] **Or . . . or:** either . . . or. [7] **timely:** speedy; early. [8] **warrant me:** give me answer that; assure me that. [9] **would they:** even if they would. [10] **disannul:** annul.

But to our honour's great disparagement,
Yet will I favour thee in what I can.
Therefore, merchant, I'll limit thee this day
To seek thy life[1] by beneficial help:
Try all the friends thou hast in Ephesus;
Beg thou, or borrow, to make up the sum,
And live; if no,[2] then thou art doom'd to die.—
Gaoler, take him to thy custody.

GAOLER.

I will, my lord.

AEGEON.

Hopeless and helpless doth Aegeon wend,
But to procrastinate his lifeless end.[3] [*Exeunt.*

Scene II.

The Mart.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE, DROMIO OF SYRACUSE, *and* FIRST MERCHANT.

FIRST MERCHANT.

Therefore give out[4] you are of Epidamnum,
Lest that your goods too soon be confiscate.[5]
This very day a Syracusian merchant
Is apprehended for[6] arrival here;
And, not being able to buy out[7] his life,
According to the statute of the town,
Dies ere the weary sun set in the west.
There is your money that I had to keep.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Go bear it to the Centaur,[8] where we host,[9]
And stay there, Dromio, till I come to thee.
Within this hour it will be dinner-time:
Till that,[10] I'll view the manners of the town,

---

[1] **thy life:** the saving of your life. [2] **no:** not. [3] **lifeless end:** death. [4] **give out:** let it be known that. [5] ***confiscate:*** *confiscated.* [6] **apprehended for:** arrested upon his. [7] **buy out:** ransom. [8] **the Centaur:** an inn; at the sign of the Centaur. [9] **host:** lodge. [10] **Till that:** until then.

Peruse[1] the traders, gaze upon the buildings,—
And then return, and sleep within mine inn;
For with long travel I am stiff and weary.
Get thee away.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Many a man would take you at your word,
And go indeed, having so good a mean.[2] [*Exit.*

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

A trusty villain,[3] sir; that very oft,
When I am dull with care and melancholy,
Lightens my humour[4] with his merry jests.
What, will you walk with me about the town,
And then go to my inn, and dine with me?

FIRST MERCHANT.

I am invited, sir, to certain merchants,
Of whom I hope to make much benefit;
I crave your pardon. Soon at five o'clock,
Please you, I'll meet with you upon the mart,[5]
And afterwards consort you[6] till bed-time:
My present business calls me from you now.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Farewell till then: I will go lose myself,
And wander up and down to view the city.

FIRST MERCHANT.

Sir, I commend you to your own content. [*Exit.*

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

He that commends me to mine own content
Commends me to the thing I cannot get.
I to the world am like a drop of water,
That in the ocean seeks another drop;
Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,[7]
Unseen, inquisitive, confounds[8] himself:
So I, to find a mother and a brother,

---

[1] **Peruse:** observe. [2] **so good a mean:** such a large sum of money. [3] **villain:** servant. [4] **humour:** mood. [5] **mart:** market place. [6] **consort you:** keep you company. [7] **find his fellow forth:** seek his companion. [8] **confounds:** loses.

In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself.—
Here comes the almanack of my true date.[1]

Enter DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

What now? how chance thou art return'd so soon?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Return'd so soon! rather approacht too late:
The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit;
The clock hath strucken twelve upon the bell,—
My mistress made it one upon my cheek:
She is so hot, because the meat is cold;
The meat is cold, because you come not home;
You come not home, because you have no stomach;[2]
You have no stomach, having broke your fast;
But we, that know what 'tis to fast and pray,
Are penitent for your default to-day.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Stop in your wind,[3] sir: tell me this, I pray,—
Where have you left the money that I gave you?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

O,—sixpence, that I had o' Wednesday last
To pay the saddler for my mistress' crupper:—
The saddler had it, sir; I kept it not.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I am not in a sportive humour now:
Tell me, and dally not, where is the money?
We being strangers here, how darest thou trust
So great a charge from thine own custody?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

I pray you, jest, sir, as you sit at dinner:
I from my mistress come to you in post;[4]
If I return, I shall be post[5] indeed,

---

[1] **almanack of my true date:** reminder of my birth date.
[2] **stomach:** appetite.
[3] **Stop . . . wind:** stop before you are out of breath.
[4] **in post:** in great haste.
[5] **post:** scored.

For she will score[1] your fault upon my pate.[2]
Methinks your maw,[3] like mine, should be your clock,
And strike you home without a messenger.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Come, Dromio, come, these jests are out of season;[4]
Reserve them till a merrier hour than this.
Where is the gold I gave in charge to thee?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

To me, sir! why, you gave no gold to me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Come on, sir knave, have done your foolishness,
And tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

My charge was but to fetch you from the mart
Home to your house, the Phœnix, sir, to dinner:
My mistress and her sister stay[5] for you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Now, as I am a Christian, answer me,
In what safe place you have bestow'd [6] my money;
Or I shall break that merry sconce[7] of yours,
That stands on[8] tricks when I am undisposed:
Where is the thousand marks thou hadst of me?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

I have some marks of yours upon my pate,
Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders;
But not a thousand marks between you both.
If I should pay your worship those again,
Perchance you will not bear them patiently.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Thy mistress' marks! what mistress, slave, hast thou?

---

[1] **score:** scratch. [2] **pate:** head. [3] **maw:** stomach. [4] **season:** order. [5] **stay:** wait. [6] **bestow'd:** deposited. [7] **sconce:** slang for head. [8] **stands on:** insists upon.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Your worship's wife, my mistress at the Phœnix;
She that doth fast till you come home to dinner,
And prays that you will hie you home to dinner.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What, wilt thou flout me thus unto my face,
Being forbid? There, take you that, sir knave. [*Beating him.*

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

What mean you, sir? for God's sake, hold your hands!
Nay, an you will not, sir, I'll take my heels. [*Exit.*

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Upon my life, by some device or other
The villain is o'er-raught[1] of all my money.
They say this town is full of cozenage;[2]
As, nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,
Soul-killing witches that deform the body,
Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,
And many such-like liberties of sin:[3]
If it prove so, I will be gone the sooner.
I'll to the Centaur, to go seek this slave:
I greatly fear my money is not safe. [*Exit.*

---

[1] ***is o'er-raught:*** has cheated me.
[2] **cozenage:** trickery.
[3] **liberties of sin:** licensed sinners, or offenders.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT 2

ACT TWO

ADRIANA, the wife of the Ephesian Antipholus, complains to her sister about her troubles with her husband. Dromio, returning without his master, makes her only the more furious. The Syracusan Antipholus meets his own Dromio, and when the slave will not own up to his "merry humours" of dinner invitations or gold denied, gets a beating from his angry master. Adriana and her sister appear and add to the bewilderment of the Syracusans. This all seems very strange to Antipholus, but he decides to see it through. He goes in to dinner and leaves his slave guarding the gate.

ACT II. Scene I.

Before the house of ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Enter ADRIANA *and* LUCIANA.

ADRIANA.

Neither my husband nor the slave return'd,
That in such haste I sent to seek his master!
Sure, Luciana, it is two o'clock.

LUCIANA.

Perhaps some merchant hath invited him,
And from the mart he's somewhere gone to dinner.

Good sister, let us dine, and never fret:
A man is master of his liberty:
Time is their master; and when they see time,
They'll go or come: if so, be patient, sister.

ADRIANA.

Why should their liberty than ours be more?

LUCIANA.

Because their business still lies out o' door.[1]

ADRIANA.

Look, when I serve him so, he takes it ill.

LUCIANA.

O, know he is the bridle of your will.

ADRIANA.

There's none but asses will be bridled so.

LUCIANA.

Why, headstrong liberty is lasht[2] with woe.
There's nothing situate[3] under heaven's eye
But hath his bound,[4] in earth, in sea, in sky:
The beasts, the fishes, and the winged fowls,
Are their males' subjects and at their controls:[5]
Men, more divine, the masters of all these,
Lords of the wide world and wild wat'ry seas,
Indued [6] with intellectual sense and souls,
Of more pre-eminence than fish and fowls,
Are masters to their females and their lords:
Then let your will attend on their accords.

ADRIANA.

This servitude makes[7] you to keep unwed.

---

[1] **out o' door:** away from home. [2] **lasht:** scourged. [3] **situate:** situated. [4] **bound:** boundary. [5] **at their controls:** under their domination. [6] **Indued:** endowed. [7] **makes:** causes.

LUCIANA.

Not this, but troubles of the marriage-bed.

ADRIANA.

But, were you[1] wedded, you would bear some sway.[2]

LUCIANA.

Ere I learn love, I'll practise to obey.

ADRIANA.

How if your husband start some other where?[3]

LUCIANA.

Till he come home again, I would forbear.[4]

ADRIANA.

Patience unmoved! no marvel though she pause;
They can be meek that have no other cause.[5]
A wretched soul, bruised with adversity,
We bid be quiet when we hear it cry;
But were we burden'd with like weight of pain,
As much, or more, we should ourselves complain:
So thou, that hast no unkind mate to grieve thee,
With urging helpless[6] patience would relieve me;
But, if thou live to see like right bereft,
This fool-begg'd patience in thee will be left.[7]

LUCIANA.

Well, I will marry one day, but to try.[8]—
Here comes your man; now is your husband nigh.

Enter DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

ADRIANA.

Say, is your tardy master now at hand?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Nay, he's at two hands with me, and that my two ears can witness.

ADRIANA.

Say, didst thou speak with him? know'st thou his mind?

---

[1] **were you:** if you were. [2] **bear some sway:** endure some domination. [3] **start . . . where:** stray after some other woman. [4] **forbear:** be patient. [5] **that have no other cause:** that is, who have no cause to be otherwise. [6] **helpless:** unhelpful. [7] **fool-begg'd patience . . . left:** foolishly demanded patience will be your only consolation. [8] **but to try:** if only to try it.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Ay, ay, he told his mind upon mine ear:
Beshrew[1] his hand, I scarce could understand it.

LUCIANA.

Spake he so doubtfully, thou couldst not feel his meaning?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Nay, he struck so plainly, I could too well feel his blows; and withal so doubtfully, that I could scarce understand them.[2]

ADRIANA.

But say, I prithee, is he coming home?
It seems he hath great care to please his wife.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Why, mistress, sure my master is horn-mad.

ADRIANA.

Horn-mad,[3] thou villain!

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

I mean not cuckold-mad;
But, sure, he is stark mad.
When I desired him to come home to dinner.
He ask'd me for a thousand marks in gold:
'Tis dinner-time,' quoth I; 'My gold,' quoth he:
'Your meat doth burn,' quoth I; 'My gold,' quoth he:
'Will you come home?' quoth I; 'My gold,' quoth he;
'Where is the thousand marks I gave thee, villain?'
'The pig,' quoth I, 'is burn'd;' 'My gold,' quoth he:

---

[1] **Beshrew:** curse.

[2] **understand them:** stand up under them.

[3] **Horn-mad:** Adriana thinks Dromio means that her husband is enraged at being made a cuckold—a deceived husband.

'My mistress, sir,' quoth I; 'Hang up thy mistress!
I know not thy mistress; out on thy mistress!'

LUCIANA.

Quoth who?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Quoth my master:
'I know,' quoth he, 'no house; no wife, no mistress.'
So that my arrant, due unto my tongue,[1]
I thank him, I bear home upon my shoulders;
For, in conclusion, he did beat me there.

ADRIANA.

Go back again, thou slave, and fetch him home.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Go back again, and be new beaten home!
For God's sake, send some other messenger.

ADRIANA.

Back, slave, or I will break thy pate across.[2]

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

And he will bless that cross with other beating:
Between you I shall have a holy head.

ADRIANA.

Hence, prating peasant! fetch thy master home.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Am I so round [3] with you as you with me,
That like a football you do spurn[4] me thus?
You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither:
If I last in this service, you must case[5] me in leather. [*Exit.*

LUCIANA.

Fie, how impatience low'reth[6] in your face!

ADRIANA.

His company must do his minions[7] grace,[8]

---

[1] **my arrant, due unto my tongue:** the answer to my message (errand). [2] **break thy pate across:** split your head open. [3] **round:** (1) spherical (applied to himself) (2) blunt (applied to his mistress). [4] **spurn:** kick. [5] **case:** encase. [6] **low'reth:** frowns. [7] **minions:** darlings; sweethearts. [8] **grace:** honor.

Whilst I at home starve for a merry look.
Hath homely age th' alluring beauty took
From my poor cheek? then he hath wasted it:
Are my discourses dull? barren my wit?
If voluble and sharp discourse be marr'd,
Unkindness blunts it more than marble hard:
Do their gay vestments his affections bait? [1]
That's not my fault,—he's master of my state:
What ruins are in me that can be found
By him not ruin'd? then is he the ground [2]
Of my defeatures.[3] My decayed fair[4]
A sunny look of his would soon repair:
But, too unruly deer, he breaks the pale,[5]
And feeds from home; poor I am but his stale.[6]

LUCIANA.

Self-harming jealousy,—fie, beat it hence!

ADRIANA.

Unfeeling fools can with such wrongs dispense.[7]
I know his eye doth homage otherwhere;[8]
Or else what lets[9] it but he would be here?
Sister, you know he promised me a chain;—
Would that alone, alone he would detain,
So he would keep fair quarter with[10] his bed!
I see the jewel best enamelled
Will lose his beauty; and though gold bides still
The tester's touch, yet often-touching will
Wear gold:[11] and so no man that hath a name,
But falsehood and corruption doth it shame.
Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,
I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.

LUCIANA.

How many fond [12] fools serve mad jealousy! [*Exeunt.*

---

[1] **bait:** lure; entice. [2] **ground:** cause. [3] **my defeatures:** the alteration of my features for the worse. [4] **fair:** fairness; beauty. [5] **pale:** fence. [6] **stale:** something used as a pretense to hide the truth. [7] **dispense:** put up with. [8] **otherwhere:** somewhere else. [9] **lets:** hinders. [10] **keep fair quarter with:** be true to. [11] **I see . . . gold:** an enameled piece of jewelry will eventually lose its luster, and even gold will be dulled by much handling. [12] **fond:** doting.

Scene II.

The Mart.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

The gold I gave to Dromio is laid up
Safe at the Centaur; and the heedful slave
Is wander'd forth, in care to seek me out.
By computation and mine host's report,
I could not speak with Dromio since at first
I sent him from the mart.—See, here he comes.

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

How now, sir! is your merry humour alter'd?
As you love strokes,[1] so jest with me again.
You know no Centaur? you received no gold?
Your mistress sent to have me home to dinner?
My house was at the Phœnix? Wast thou mad,
That thus so madly thou didst answer me?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

What answer, sir? when spake I such a word?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Even now, even here, not half an hour since.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I did not see you since you sent me hence,
Home to the Centaur, with the gold you gave me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Villain, thou didst deny the gold's receipt,
And told'st me of a mistress and a dinner;
For which, I hope, thou felt'st I was displeased.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I am glad to see you in this merry vein:[2]
What means this jest? I pray you, master, tell me.

---

[1] **As you love strokes:** if you like beatings.
[2] **vein:** mood; humor.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Yea, dost thou jeer and flout me in the teeth?
Think'st thou I jest? Hold, take thou that, and that.

[*Beats* DROMIO.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Hold, sir, for God's sake! now your jest is earnest:[1]
Upon what bargain do you give it me?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Because that I familiarly sometimes
Do use you for my fool, and chat with you,
Your sauciness will jest upon my love,
And make a common of my serious hours.[2]
When the sun shines let foolish gnats make sport,
But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.
If you will jest with me, know my aspect,[3]
And fashion your demeanour to my looks,
Or I will beat this method in your sconce.[4]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Sconce call you it? so you would leave battering, I had rather have it a head: an you use these blows long, I must get a sconce[4] for my head, and ensconce it too; or else I shall seek my wit in my shoulders. But, I pray, sir, why am I beaten?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Dost thou not know?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Nothing, sir, but that I am beaten.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Shall I tell you why?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Ay, sir, and wherefore; for they say every why hath a wherefore.

---

[1] **earnest:** in earnest; used with a pun on "earnest money"—money given to seal a bargain. [2] **make . . . hours:** intrude on my time as you please; the word *commons*—tracts of land open to the public—is taken from this meaning of *common*. [3] **know my aspect:** study my face. [4] **sconce:** petty fortification; helmet.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Why, first,—for flouting me; and then wherefore,—
For urging it[1] the second time to me.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Was there ever any man thus beaten out of season,[2]
When in the why and the wherefore is neither rime nor reason?
Well, sir, I thank you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Thank me, sir! for what?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I'll make you amends next, to give you nothing for something.
But say, sir, is it dinner-time?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

No, sir: I think the meat wants that[3] I have.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

In good time,[4] sir; what's that?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Basting.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Well, sir, then 'twill be dry.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

If it be, sir, I pray you, eat none of it.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Your reason?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Lest it make you choleric,[5] and purchase me another dry basting.[6]

---

[1] **urging it:** speaking of it.
[2] **out of season:** for no reason.
[3] **wants that:** lacks what.
[4] **In good time:** I'll indulge you.
[5] **choleric:** ill-tempered.
[6] **dry basting:** severe beating.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Well, sir, learn to jest in good time: there's a time for all things.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I durst have denied that, before you were so choleric.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

By what rule, sir?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry,[1] sir, by a rule as plain as the plain bald pate[2] of father Time himself.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Let's hear it.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

There's no time for a man to recover his hair that grows bald by nature.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

May he not do it by fine and recovery? [3]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Yes, to pay a fine for a periwig, and recover the lost hair of another man.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Why is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as it is, so plentiful an excrement? [4]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Because it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts: and what he hath scanted men in hair, he hath given them in wit.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Why, but there's many a man hath more hair than wit.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Not a man of those but he hath the wit to lose his hair.[5]

---

[1] **Marry:** indeed.
[2] **pate:** head.
[3] **by fine and recovery:** that is, by legal action.
[4] **excrement:** outgrowth (used both of nails and hair).
[5] ***lose his hair:*** *i.e., by evil living.*

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Why, thou didst conclude hairy men plain-dealers without wit.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

The plainer dealer, the sooner lost: yet he loseth it in a kind of jollity.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

For what reason?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

For two; and sound [1] ones too.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Nay, not sound, I pray you.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Sure ones, then.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Nay, not sure, in a thing falsing.[2]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Certain ones, then.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Name them.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

The one, to save the money that he spends in tiring;[3] the other, that at dinner they should not drop in his porridge.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

You would all this time have proved there is no time for all things.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, and did, sir; namely, no time to recover hair lost by nature.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

But your reason was not substantial, why there is no time to recover.

---

[1] **sound:** healthy.

[2] **falsing:** falsifying; deceptive.

[3] **tiring:** dressing his hair.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Thus I mend[1] it: Time himself is bald, and therefore to the world's end will have bald followers.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I knew 'twould be a bald conclusion:
But, soft! who wafts[2] us yonder?

Enter ADRIANA *and* LUCIANA.

ADRIANA.

Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange[3] and frown:
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects;[4]
I am not Adriana nor thy wife.
The time was once when thou unurged wouldst vow
That never words were music to thine ear,
That never object pleasing in thine eye,
That never touch well-welcome to thy hand,
That never meat sweet-savour'd in thy taste,
Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carved to thee.
How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,
That thou art then estranged from thyself?
Thyself I call it, being strange to me,
That, undividable, incorporate,
Am better than thy dear self's better part.[5]
Ah, do not tear away thyself from me!
For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall[6]
A drop of water in the breaking gulf,[7]
And take unmingled thence that drop again,
Without addition or diminishing,
As take from me thyself, and not me too.
How dearly[8] would it touch thee to the quick,
Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious,
And that this body, consecrate to thee,

---

[1] **mend:** amend. [2] **wafts:** beckons. [3] **strange:** aloof; distant. [4] **aspects:** glances. [5] **better part:** soul. [6] **fall:** let fall. [7] **gulf:** whirlpool. [8] **dearly:** grievously.

By ruffian lust should be contaminate!
Wouldst thou not spit at me and spurn at me,
And hurl the name of husband in my face,
And tear the stain'd skin[1] off my harlot-brow,
And from my false hand cut the wedding-ring,
And break it with a deep-divorcing vow?
I know thou canst; and therefore see thou do it.
I am possest with an adulterate blot;[2]
My blood is mingled with the grime of lust:
For if we two be one, and thou play false,
I do digest the poison of thy flesh,
Being strumpeted [3] by thy contagion.
Keep, then, fair league and truce with thy true bed;
I live unstain'd, thou undishonoured.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Plead you to me, fair dame? I know you not:
In Ephesus I am but two hours old,
As strange unto your town as to your talk;
Who, every word by all my wit being scann'd,
Want wit in all one word to understand.

LUCIANA.

Fie, brother! how the world is changed with you!
When were you wont to use my sister thus?
She sent for you by Dromio home to dinner.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

By Dromio!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

By me!

ADRIANA.

By thee; and this thou didst return from him,—
That he did buffet thee, and, in his blows,
Denied my house for his, me for his wife.

---

[1] **stain'd skin:** the mark of a harlot.
[2] **possest . . . blot:** that is, she is stained by her husband's adultery.
[3] **strumpeted:** made a strumpet.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Did you converse, sir, with this gentlewoman?
What is the course and drift[1] of your compact? [2]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I, sir! I never saw her till this time.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Villain, thou liest; for even her very words
Didst thou deliver to me on the mart.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I never spake with her in all my life.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

How can she thus, then, call us by our names,
Unless it be by inspiration? [3]

ADRIANA.

How ill agrees it with your gravity
To counterfeit thus grossly with your slave,
Abetting him to thwart me in my mood! [4]
Be it my wrong you are from me exempt,[5]
But wrong not that wrong with a more contempt.
Come, I will fasten on[6] this sleeve of thine:
Thou art an elm, my husband,—I a vine,
Whose weakness, married to thy stronger state,
Makes me with thy strength to communicate:[7]
If aught possess thee from me,[8] it is dross,
Usurping ivy, brier, or idle[9] moss;
Who, all for want of pruning, with intrusion
Infect thy sap, and live on thy confusion.[10]

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE [*aside*].

To me she speaks; she moves me for her theme:[11]
What, was I married to her in my dream?
Or sleep I now, and think I hear all this?
What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?

---

[1] **course and drift:** intention; purpose. [2] **compact:** agreement. [3] **inspiration:** supernatural means. [4] **mood:** anger. [5] **you are from me exempt:** I have no power over you. [6] **fasten on:** clutch. [7] **communicate:** partake. [8] **possess . . . me:** dispossess me of you. [9] **idle:** unfruitful; useless. [10] **confusion:** ruin. [11] **moves . . . theme:** takes me for her subject.

Until I know this sure uncertainty,[1]
I'll entertain the offer'd fallacy.[2]

LUCIANA.

Dromio, go bid the servants spread for dinner.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

O, for my beads! [3] I cross me for a sinner.
This is the fairy land;—O spite of spites!—
We talk with goblins, owls, and elvish sprites:
If we obey them not, this will ensue,—
They'll suck our breath, or pinch us black and blue.

LUCIANA.

Why pratest thou to thyself, and answer'st not?
Dromio, thou drone, thou snail, thou slug, thou sot! [4]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I am transformed, master, am not I?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I think thou art in mind, and so am I.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Nay, master, both in mind and in my shape.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Thou hast thine own form.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

No, I am an ape.[5]

LUCIANA.

If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an ass.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

'Tis true; she rides me, and I long for grass.
'Tis so, I am an ass; else it could never be
But I should know her as well as she knows me.

ADRIANA.

Come, come, no longer will I be a fool,

---

[1] **Until . . . uncertainty:** until I unravel this mystery.
[2] **entertain . . . fallacy:** accept the false situation.
[3] **beads:** rosary.
[4] **sot:** fool.
[5] **ape:** imitation of something else.

To put the finger in the eye[1] and weep,
Whilst man and master laugh my woes to scorn.—
Come, sir, to dinner.—Dromio, keep the gate.—
Husband, I'll dine above with you to-day,
And shrive you[2] of a thousand idle[3] pranks.—
Sirrah, if any ask you for your master,
Say he dines forth,[4] and let no creature enter.—
Come, sister.—Dromio, play the porter[5] well.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE [*aside*].

Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?
Sleeping or waking? mad or well-advised? [6]
Known unto these, and to myself disguised!
I'll say as they say, and persever so,
And in this mist at all adventures go.[7]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Master, shall I be porter at the gate?

ADRIANA.

Ay; and let none enter, lest I break your pate.

LUCIANA.

Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too late. [*Exeunt.*

---

[1] **put . . . eye:** act like a child. [2] **shrive you:** call you to confession. [3] **idle:** foolish. [4] **forth:** out; away from home. [5] **porter:** keeper of the gate. [6] **well-advised:** in my right mind. [7] **at all adventures go:** participate, no matter what the outcome.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT 3

ACT THREE

THE EPHESIAN Antipholus arrives home for dinner with some business associates, a merchant and a jeweller who is making him a gold chain as a present for Adriana, but the whole group is left standing in the street; Syracusan Dromio won't open the door. Even Adriana, finally at dinner with her presumed husband, tells the noisy bunch to go away. The husband is furious to the point of smashing down the door, but is talked out it—for fear of scandal—by his friends. They go off to dine, at Antipholus' invitation, with a courtesan; he will give her the gold chain. Back at his house, the innocent Syracusan Antipholus is making advances to Luciana, his supposed sister-in-law. He is told to do his duty to his wife, a wife he emphatically denies. His slave has inherited love complications, too. He is being hotly pursued by an immensely fat, greasy kitchen wench, Nell, his unknown twin's love. Another mystery for Antipholus—a goldsmith calls him rightly by name and hands him a gold chain.

ACT III. Scene I.

Before the house of ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS, DROMIO OF EPHESUS, ANGELO, *and* BALTHAZAR.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Good Signior Angelo you must excuse us all;
My wife is shrewish[1] when I keep not hours:
Say that I linger'd with you at your shop
To see the making of her carcanet,[2]

---

[1] **shrewish:** sharp-tempered.
[2] **carcanet:** gold necklace or chain.

And that to-morrow you will bring it home.
But here's a villain that would face me down[1]
He met me on the mart, and that I beat him,
And charged him with[2] a thousand marks in gold,
And that I did deny my wife and house.—
Thou drunkard, thou, what didst thou mean by this?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Say what you will, sir, but I know what I know;
That you beat me at the mart, I have your hand to show:
If the skin were parchment, and the blows you gave were ink,
Your own handwriting would tell you what I think.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I think thou art an ass.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Marry, so it doth appear
By the wrongs I suffer and the blows I bear.
I should kick, being kickt; and, being at that pass,
You would keep from my heels, and beware of an ass.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

You're sad,[3] Signior Balthazar: pray God our cheer[4]
May answer my good will and your good welcome here!

BALTHAZAR.

I hold your dainties[5] cheap, sir, and your welcome dear.[6]

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

O, Signior Balthazar, either at flesh or fish,
A table full of welcome makes scarce one dainty dish.

---

[1] **face me down:** say it isn't true.
[2] **charged him with:** asked him to give an account of.
[3] **sad:** glum.
[4] **cheer:** hospitality.
[5] **dainties:** choice dishes.
[6] **dear:** at a high value.

BALTHAZAR.

Good meat, sir, is common; that every churl [1] affords.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

And welcome more common; for that's nothing but words.

BALTHAZAR.

Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Ay, to a niggardly host and more sparing guest:
But though my cates[2] be mean, take them in good part:
Better cheer may you have, but not with better heart.
But, soft! [3] my door is lockt.—Go bid them let us in.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cicely, Gillian, Ginn!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE [*within*].

Mome,[4] malt-horse,[5] capon, coxcomb, idiot, patch! [6]
Either get thee from the door, or sit down at the hatch.[7]
Dost thou conjure for wenches, that thou call'st for such store,
When one is one too many? Go get thee from the door.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

What patch is made our porter?—My master stays in the street.

---

[1] **churl:** ordinary person. [2] **cates:** little dainties. [3] **soft:** wait. [4] **Mome:** stupid blockhead, a stock, or a post; *mum* is derived from this word. [5] **malt-horse:** brewer's horse. [6] **patch:** fool—from the particolored coats worn by professional fools or jesters. [7] **hatch:** half-door.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE [*within*].

Let him walk from whence he came, lest he catch cold on's[1] feet.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Who talks within there? ho, open the door!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE [*within*].

Right, sir; I'll tell you when, an you'll tell me wherefore.[2]

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Wherefore! for my dinner: I have not dined to-day.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE [*within*].

Nor to-day here you must not; come again when you may.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

What art thou that keep'st me out from the house I owe? [3]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE [*within*].

The porter for this time, sir, and my name is Dromio.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

O villain, thou hast stol'n both mine office and my name!
The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle[4] blame.
If thou hadst been Dromio to-day in my place,
Thou wouldst have changed thy face for a name, or thy name for an ass.[5]

LUCE [*within*].

What a coil [6] is there, Dromio! who are those at the gate?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Let my master in, Luce.

---

[1] **on's:** in his. [2] **wherefore:** why. [3] **owe:** own; possess. [4] **mickle:** much. [5] **If thou . . . ass:** if you had been in my place today, you would have been glad to wear another man's face. [6] **coil:** commotion.

LUCE [*within*].

Faith, no; he comes too late;
And so tell your master.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

O Lord, I must laugh!—
Have at you with a proverb;—Shall I set in my staff?

LUCE [*within*].

Have at you with another; that's,— When? can you tell? [1]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE [*within*].

If thy name be call'd Luce,—Luce, thou hast answer'd him well.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Do you hear, you minion? [2] you'll let us in, I hope?

LUCE [*within*].

I thought to have askt you.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE [*within*].

And you said no.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

So, come, help:—well struck! there was blow for blow.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Thou baggage, let me in.

LUCE [*within*].

Can you tell for whose sake?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Master, knock the door hard.

LUCE [*within*].

Let him knock till it ache.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

You'll cry for this, minion, if I beat the door down.

---

[1] **When? can you tell:** a way of turning a query aside.
[2] **minion:** hussy.

LUCE [*within*].

What needs all that, and a pair of stocks in the town?

ADRIANA [*within*].

Who is that at the door that keeps all this noise?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE [*within*].

By my troth, your town is troubled with unruly boys.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Are you there, wife? you might have come before.

ADRIANA [*within*].

Your wife, sir knave! go get you from the door.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

If you went in pain, master, this knave would go sore.[1]

ANGELO.

Here is neither cheer, sir, nor welcome: we would fain have either.

BALTHAZAR.

In debating which was best, we shall part[2] with neither.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

They stand at the door, master; bid them welcome hither.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

There is something in the wind, that we cannot get in.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

You would say so, master, if your garments were thin.

---

[1] **If you . . . sore:** if Antipholus is a knave (menial), he and his servant are two of a kind.

[2] **part:** depart.

Your cake there is warm within; you stand here in the cold:
It would make a man mad as a buck, to be so bought and sold.[1]

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Go fetch me something: I'll break ope the gate.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE [*within*].

Break any breaking here, and I'll break your knave's pate.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

A man may break a word with you, sir; and words are but wind;
Ay, and break it in your face, so he break it not behind.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE [*within*].

It seems thou want'st breaking: out upon thee, hind![2]

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Here's too much 'out upon thee!' I pray thee, let me in.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE [*within*].

Ay, when fowls have no feathers, and fish have no fin.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Well, I'll break in:—go borrow me a crow.[3]

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

A crow without feather,—master, mean you so?
For a fish without a fin, there's a fowl without a feather:
If a crow help us in, sirrah, we'll pluck a crow together.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Go get thee gone; fetch me an iron crow.

---

[1] **bought and sold:** cheated.
[2] **hind:** menial; slave.
[3] **crow:** crowbar.

BALTHAZAR.

Have patience, sir; O, let it not be so!
Herein you war against your reputation,
And draw within the compass of suspect[1]
Th' unviolated honour of your wife.
Once this,[2]—your long experience of her wisdom,
Her sober virtue, years, and modesty,
Plead on her part some cause to you unknown;
And doubt not, sir, but she will well excuse
Why at this time the doors are made[3] against you.
Be ruled by me: depart in patience,
And let us to the Tiger all to dinner;
And about evening come yourself alone
To know the reason of this strange restraint.
If by strong hand you offer to break in
Now in the stirring passage[4] of the day,
A vulgar[5] comment will be made of it,
And that supposed by the common rout[6]
Against your yet ungalled estimation,[7]
That may with foul intrusion enter in,
And dwell upon your grave when you are dead;
For slander lives upon succession,[8]
For ever housed where it gets possession.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

You have prevail'd: I will depart in quiet,
And, in despite of mirth,[9] mean to be merry.
I know a wench of excellent discourse,
Pretty and witty; wild, and yet, too, gentle:
There will we dine. This woman that I mean,
My wife—but, I protest, without desert[10]—
Hath oftentimes upbraided me withal:
To her will we to dinner.—Get you home,
And fetch the chain; by this I know 'tis made:

---

[1] **draw . . . suspect:** bring under suspicion. [2] **Once this:** in short. [3] **are made:** are barred. [4] **stirring passage:** busy traffic. [5] **vulgar:** public. [6] **rout:** mob. [7] **ungalled estimation:** unblemished reputation. [8] **lives upon succession:** lives on into succeeding generations. [9] **in despite of mirth:** in spite of not feeling merry. [10] **without desert:** without my deserving it.

Bring it, I pray you, to the Porpentine;[1]
For there's the house: that chain will I bestow—
Be it for nothing but to spite my wife—
Upon mine hostess there: good sir, make haste.
Since mine own doors refuse to entertain[2] me,
I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me.

ANGELO.

I'll meet you at that place some hour hence.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Do so. This jest shall cost me some expense. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The same.

Enter LUCIANA *and* ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

LUCIANA.

And may it be that you have quite forgot
A husband's office? shall, Antipholus,
Even in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot?
Shall love, in building,[3] grow so ruinous?
If you did wed my sister for her wealth,
Then for her wealth's sake use her with more kindness:
Or if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth;
Muffle your false love with some show of blindness:
Let not my sister read it in your eye;
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator;
Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty;[4]
Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger;
Bear a fair presence,[5] though your heart be tainted
Teach sin the carriage[6] of a holy saint;

---

[1] **Porpentine:** Porcupine (the sign of the house). [2] **entertain:** welcome. [3] **in building:** with the years. [4] **become disloyalty:** make your disloyalty becoming to you (by pretending affection for your wife). [5] **Bear a fair presence:** make a good appearance. [6] **carriage:** bearing; behavior.

Be secret-false: what need she be acquainted?
What simple thief brags of his own attaint? [1]
'Tis double wrong, to truant with your bed,
And let her read it in thy looks at board: [2]
Shame hath a bastard [3] fame, well managed;
Ill deeds is doubled with an evil word.
Alas, poor women! make us but believe,
Being compact of credit, [4] that you love us;
Though others have the arm, show us the sleeve;
We in your motion turn, [5] and you may move us.
Then, gentle brother, get you in again;
Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife:
'Tis holy sport, to be a little vain, [6]
When the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Sweet mistress,—what your name is else, I know not,
Nor by what wonder you do hit of [7] mine,—
Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not
Than our earth's wonder; more than earth divine.
Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak;
Lay open to my earthy-gross conceit, [8]
Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,
The folded [9] meaning of your words' deceit.
Against my soul's pure truth why labour you
To make it wander in an unknown field?
Are you a god? would you create me new?
Transform me, then, and to your power I'll yield.
But if that I am I, then well I know

---

[1] **attaint:** disgrace. [2] **at board:** at the dining table. [3] **bastard:** spurious. [4] **Being compact of credit:** being entirely credulous. [5] **in your motion turn:** revolve around you. [6] **vain:** "light of tongue, not veracious"—Johnson. [7] **hit of:** hit on; guess. [8] **conceit:** understanding. [9] **folded:** concealed.

Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,
Nor to her bed no homage do I owe:
Far more, far more to you do I decline.[1]
O, train[2] me not, sweet mermaid[3] with thy note,
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears:
Sing, siren, for thyself, and I will dote:
Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,
And as a bed I'll take them, and there lie;
And, in that glorious supposition, think
He gains by death that hath such means to die:
Let Love, being light,[4] be drowned if she sink!

LUCIANA.

What, are you mad, that you do reason so?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Not mad, but mated;[5] how, I do not know.

LUCIANA.

It is a fault that springeth from your eye.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

For gazing on your beams, fair sun, being by.[6]

LUCIANA.

Gaze where you should, and that will clear your sight.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

As good to wink,[7] sweet love, as look on night.

LUCIANA.

Why call you me love? call my sister so.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Thy sister's sister.

LUCIANA.

That's my sister.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

No;
It is thyself, mine own self's better part,

---

[1] **decline:** incline. [2] **train:** entice. [3] **mermaid:** siren. [4] **light:** wanton; lightweight. [5] **mated:** married; also stupefied. [6] **being by:** when you are near. [7] **wink:** close the eyes.

Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer heart,
My food, my fortune, and my sweet hope's aim,
My sole earth's heaven, and my heaven's claim.[1]

LUCIANA.

All this my sister is, or else should be.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Call thyself sister, sweet, for I aim[2] thee.
Thee will I love, and with thee lead my life:
Thou hast no husband yet, nor I no wife.
Give me thy hand.

LUCIANA.

O, soft, sir! hold you still:
I'll fetch my sister, to get her good-will. [*Exit.*

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Why, how now, Dromio! where runn'st thou so fast?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Do you know me, sir? am I Dromio? am I your man? am I myself?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Thou art Dromio, thou art my man, thou art thyself.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I am an ass, I am a woman's man, and besides myself.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What woman's man? and how besides thyself?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, sir, besides myself, I am due to a woman; one that claims me, one that haunts me, one that will have me.

---

[1] **My sole . . . claim:** "All the happiness that I wish on earth, and all that I claim from heaven hereafter"—Malone.

[2] **aim:** mean.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What claim lays she to thee?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, sir, such claim as you would lay to your horse; and she would have me as a beast: not that, I being a beast, she would have me; but that she, being a very beastly creature, lays claim to me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What is she?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

A very reverend body; ay, such a one as a man may not speak of, without he say 'sir-reverence.' [1] I have but lean[2] luck in the match, and yet is she a wondrous fat marriage.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

How dost thou mean,—a fat marriage?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, sir, she's the kitchen-wench, and all grease; and I know not what use to put her to, but to make a lamp of her, and run from her by her own light. I warrant, her rags, and the tallow in them, will burn a Poland winter: if she lives till doomsday, she'll burn a week longer than the whole world.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What complexion is she of?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Swart,[3] like my shoe, but her face nothing like so clean kept; for why? [4] she sweats; a man may go over shoes in the grime of it.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

That's a fault that water will mend.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

No, sir, 'tis in grain;[5] Noah's flood could not do it.

---

[1] **'sir-reverence':** save your reverence (an apology for saying something that might cause offense).

[2] **lean:** poor.

[3] **Swart:** swarthy; black or dark brown.

[4] **for why?:** why?

[5] **in grain:** dyed in grain and, therefore, permanent.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What's her name?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Nell, sir; but her name and three quarters, that's an ell and three quarters, will not measure her from hip to hip.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Then she bears some breadth?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

No longer from head to foot than from hip to hip: she is spherical, like a globe; I could find out countries in her.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

In what part of her body stands Ireland?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, sir, in her buttocks: I found it out by the bogs.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Where Scotland?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I found it by the barrenness; hard in the palm of the hand.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Where France?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

In her forehead; arm'd and reverted, making war against her heir.[1]

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Where England?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I look'd for the chalky cliffs,[2] but I could find no whiteness in them; but I guess it stood in her chin, by the salt rheum[3] that ran between France and it.

---

[1] **In her forehead . . . heir:** an allusion to venereal disease; arm'd —covered with eruptions; **reverted**—having the hair turned back by the eruptions; also an allusion to armed rebellion against Henry of Navarre.

[2] **chalky cliffs:** teeth.

[3] **salt rheum:** watery discharge, from the eyes and nose.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Where Spain?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Faith, I saw it not; but I felt it hot in her breath.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Where America, the Indies?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

O, sir, upon her nose, all o'er embellish'd with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, declining their rich aspect to the hot breath of Spain; who sent whole armadoes of caracks[1] to be ballast at her nose.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Where stood Belgia, the Netherlands? [2]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

O, sir, I did not look so low. To conclude, this drudge, or diviner,[3] laid claim to me; call'd me Dromio; swore I was assured [4] to her; told me what privy marks I had about me, as, the mark of my shoulder, the mole in my neck, the great wart on my left arm, that I, amazed, ran from her as a witch:
And, I think, if my breast had not been made of faith, and my heart of steel,
She had transform'd me to a curtal dog,[5] and made me turn i' th' wheel.[6]

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Go hie thee presently[7] post[8] to the road:[9]—
An if the wind blow any way from shore,
I will not harbour in this town to-night:—
If any bark put forth, come to the mart,
Where I will walk till thou return to me.
If every one knows us, and we know none,
'Tis time, I think, to trudge, pack, and be gone.

---

[1] **armadoes of caracks:** armadas of galleons (sailing vessels). [2] **Netherlands:** i.e., nether parts. [3] **diviner:** sorceress. [4] **assured:** betrothed. [5] **a curtal dog:** a dog with a docked tail. [6] **turn i' th' wheel:** dogs were used to turn the spit on which meat was roasted. [7] **presently:** at once. [8] **post:** in haste. [9] **road:** harbor.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

As from a bear a man would run for life,
So fly I from her that would be my wife. [*Exit.*

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

There's none but witches do inhabit here;
And therefore 'tis high time that I were hence.
She that doth call me husband, even my soul
Doth for a wife abhor. But her fair sister,
Possest with such a gentle sovereign grace,
Of such enchanting presence and discourse,
Hath almost made me traitor to myself:
But, lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,
I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song.

Enter ANGELO *with the chain.*

ANGELO.

Master Antipholus,—

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Ay, that's my name.

ANGELO.

I know it well, sir:—lo, here's the chain.
I thought to have ta'en[1] you at the Porpentine:
The chain unfinish'd made me stay thus long.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What is your will that I shall do with this?

ANGELO.

What please yourself, sir: I have made it for you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Made it for me, sir! I bespoke[2] it not.

ANGELO.

Not once, nor twice, but twenty times you have.
Go home with it, and please your wife withal;
And soon[3] at supper-time I'll visit you,

---

[1] **ta'en:** overtaken.
[2] **bespoke:** ordered.
[3] **soon:** this evening.

And then receive my money for the chain.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I pray you, sir, receive the money now,
For fear you ne'er see chain nor money more.

ANGELO.

You are a merry man, sir: fare you well. [*Exit.*

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What I should think of this, I cannot tell:
But this I think, there's no man is so vain[1]
That would refuse so fair an offer'd chain.
I see a man here needs not live by shifts,
When in the streets he meets such golden gifts.
I'll to the mart, and there for Dromio stay:
If any ship put out, then straight away. [*Exit.*

---

[1] vain: foolish.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT 4

ACT FOUR

THE COMPLICATIONS INCREASE. The goldsmith, to settle his own debts, asks payment for the gold chain from Antipholus of Ephesus. Antipholus denies ever having received it. Syracusan Dromio reports to him that they are ready to sail, but is ordered home to get bail money for his master to pay for the gold chain. Adriana is listening to her sister's report of Antipholus' strange advances when in marches Dromio for the bail. But this money gets handed over to his own Syracusan master, whom Dromio meets first. The courtesan appears, asking for the gold chain promised her, but the Syracusans refuse any dealings with her, dismissing her as a sorceress trying to trap them. All that the Ephesian Antipholus receives is a piece of rope that he had sent his own Dromio to get earlier. His wife and sister-in-law appear with a quack doctor to try to cope with the man's apparent madness. Antipholus is to be exorcized. When the servant is just as bewildered by the past events as his master, both are bound and dragged off for a cure. The Syracusan Antipholus and Dromio rush in, with swords drawn, as protection from witchcraft. Everyone assumes them to be the lunatics, now on the loose, and rushes off in terror. Antipholus of Syracuse is resolved to get away from Ephesus as fast as possible.

ACT IV. Scene I.

A public place.

Enter SECOND MERCHANT, ANGELO, *and an* OFFICER.

SECOND MERCHANT.

You know since Pentecost the sum is due,
And since I have not much importuned you;
Nor now I had not, but that I am bound
To Persia, and want guilders for my voyage:
Therefore make present satisfaction,
Or I'll attach[1] you by this officer.

ANGELO.

Even just[2] the sum that I do owe to you
Is growing[3] to me by Antipholus;
And in the instant that I met with you
He had of me a chain: at five o'clock
I shall receive the money for the same.

---

[1] **attach:** arrest.
[2] **Even just:** exactly.
[3] **growing:** accruing; coming due.

Pleaseth you[1] walk with me down to his house,
I will discharge my bond, and thank you too.

OFFICER.

That labour may you save: see where he comes.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS *and* DROMIO OF EPHESUS *from the* COURTEZAN'S.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

While I go to the goldsmith's house, go thou
And buy a rope's-end: that will I bestow
Among my wife and her confederates
For locking me out of my doors by day.—
But, soft! [2] I see the goldsmith.—Get thee gone;
Buy thou a rope, and bring it home to me.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

I buy a thousand pound a year! I buy a rope! [*Exit.*

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

A man is well holp[3] up that trusts to you:
You promised your presence and the chain;
But neither chain nor goldsmith came to me.
Belike[4] you thought our love would last too long,
If it were chain'd together, and therefore came not.

ANGELO.

Saving your merry humour,[5] here's the note
How much your chain weighs to the utmost carat,
The fineness of the gold, and chargeful [6] fashion,
Which doth amount to three odd ducats more
Than I stand debted [7] to this gentleman:
I pray you, see him presently discharged,[8]
For he is bound to sea, and stays[9] but for it.

---

[1] **Pleaseth you:** if it please you to. [2] **soft:** wait. [3] **holp:** helped. [4] **Belike:** probably. [5] **Saving your merry humour:** no offense meant if I am not in your same happy mood. [6] **chargeful:** costly. [7] **debted:** indebted. [8] **presently discharged:** immediately satisfied. [9] **stays:** waits.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I am not furnish'd with the present money;
Besides, I have some business in the town.
Good signior, take the stranger to my house,
And with you take the chain, and bid my wife
Disburse the sum on the receipt thereof:
Perchance I will be there as soon as you.

ANGELO.

Then you will bring the chain to her yourself?

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

No; bear it with you, lest I come not time[1] enough.

ANGELO.

Well, sir, I will. Have you the chain about you?

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

An if I have not, sir, I hope you have;
Or else you may return without your money.

ANGELO.

Nay, come, I pray you, sir, give me the chain:
Both wind and tide stays for this gentleman,
And I, to blame, have held him here too long.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Good Lord, you use this dalliance[2] to excuse
Your breach of promise to the Porpentine.
I should have chid you for not bringing it,
But, like a shrew, you first begin to brawl.

SECOND MERCHANT.

The hour steals on; I pray you, sir, dispatch.

ANGELO.

You hear how he importunes me;—the chain!—

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Why, give it to my wife, and fetch your money.

ANGELO.

Come, come, you know I gave it you even now.
Either send the chain, or send me by some token.[3]

---

[1] **time:** in time.
[2] **dalliance:** hesitation; delay.
[3] **send . . . token:** give me a note to take to your wife, showing that you owe me for the chain.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Fie, now you run this humour out of breath.
Come, where's the chain? I pray you, let me see it.

SECOND MERCHANT.

My business cannot brook this dalliance.
Good sir, say whe'r[1] you'll answer me[2] or no:
If not, I'll leave him to the officer.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I answer you! what should I answer you?

ANGELO.

The money that you owe me for the chain.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I owe you none till I receive the chain.

ANGELO.

You know I gave it you half an hour since.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

You gave me none: you wrong me much to say so.

ANGELO.

You wrong me more, sir, in denying it:
Consider how it stands upon[3] my credit.

SECOND MERCHANT.

Well, officer, arrest him at my suit.

OFFICER.

I do;—
And charge you in the duke's name to obey me.

ANGELO.

This touches me in reputation.—
Either consent to pay this sum for me,
Or I attach you by this officer.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Consent to pay thee that[4] I never had!
Arrest me, foolish fellow, if thou darest.

---

[1] **whe'r:** whether.
[2] **answer me:** pay your debt to me.
[3] **stands upon:** affects.
[4] **that:** what.

ANGELO.

Here is thy fee; arrest him, officer.—
I would not spare my brother in this case,
If he should scorn me so apparently.[1]

OFFICER.

I do arrest you, sir: you hear the suit.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I do obey thee till I give thee bail.—
But, sirrah, you shall buy this sport as dear
As all the metal in your shop will answer.

ANGELO.

Sir, sir, I shall have law in Ephesus,
To your notorious shame, I doubt it not.

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE *from the Bay.*

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Master, there's a bark of Epidamnum
That stays but till her owner comes aboard
And then she bears away. Our fraughtage,[2] sir,
I have convey'd aboard; and I have bought
The oil, the balsamum, and aqua-vitæ.[3]
The ship is in her trim;[4] the merry wind
Blows fair from land: they stay for naught at all
But for their owner, master, and yourself.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

How now! a madman! Why, thou peevish[5] sheep,
What ship of Epidamnum stays for me?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

A ship you sent me to, to hire waftage.[6]

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Thou drunken slave, I sent thee for a rope,
And told thee to what purpose and what end.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

You sent me for a rope's-end [7] as soon:
You sent me to the bay, sir, for a bark.

---

[1] **apparently:** openly. [2] **fraughtage:** freight; cargo. [3] **aqua-vitæ:** brandy. [4] **is in her trim:** that is, her sails are rigged, ready to sail. [5] **peevish:** silly. [6] **waftage:** passage. [7] **rope's-end:** thrashing.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I will debate this matter at more leisure,
And teach your ears to list me[1] with more heed.
To Adriana, villain, hie thee straight:
Give her this key, and tell her, in the desk
That's cover'd o'er with Turkish tapestry
There is a purse of ducats; let her send it:
Tell her I am arrested in the street,
And that shall bail me: hie thee, slave, be gone.—
On, officer, to prison till it come.

[*Exeunt* SECOND MERCHANT, ANGELO, OFFICER, *and* ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

To Adriana! that is where we dined,
Where Dowsabel[2] did claim me for her husband:
She is too big, I hope, for me to compass.[3]
Thither I must, although against my will,
For servants must their masters' minds fulfil. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The house of ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Enter ADRIANA *and* LUCIANA.

ADRIANA.

Ah, Luciana, did he tempt thee so?
Mightst thou perceive austerely in his eye[4]
That he did plead in earnest, yea or no?
Look'd he or red or pale, or sad or merrily?
What observation madest thou, in this case,
Of his heart's meteors tilting in his face? [5]

LUCIANA.

First he denied you had in him no right.

---

[1] **list me:** listen to me. [2] **Dowsabel:** *douce et belle*—a pretty girl (*ironic*). [3] **compass:** encompass; embrace. [4] **austerely in his eye:** by his serious expression. [5] **heart's meteors . . . face:** an allusion to the aurora borealis, which "sometimes has the appearance of lines of armies meeting in the shock"—Warburton.

ADRIANA.

He meant he did me none; the more my spite.[1]

LUCIANA.

Then swore he that he was a stranger here.

ADRIANA.

And true he swore, though yet forsworn he were.

LUCIANA.

Then pleaded I for you.

ADRIANA.

And what said he?

LUCIANA.

That love I begg'd for you he begg'd of me.

ADRIANA.

With what persuasion did he tempt thy love?

LUCIANA.

With words that in an honest suit might move.
First he did praise my beauty, then my speech.

ADRIANA.

Didst speak him fair?

LUCIANA.

Have patience, I beseech.

ADRIANA.

I cannot, nor I will not, hold me still;
My tongue, though not my heart, shall have his[2] will.
He is deformed, crooked, old, and sere,[3]
Ill-faced, worse-bodied, shapeless everywhere;
Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind;
Stigmatical in making,[4] worse in mind.

LUCIANA.

Who would be jealous, then, of such a one?
No evil lost is wail'd when it is gone.

---

[1] **spite:** vexation; resentment.
[2] **his:** its.
[3] **sere:** dried up; wrinkled.
[4] **Stigmatical in making:** marked by nature with deformity.

ADRIANA.

Ah, but I think him better than I say,
And yet would herein others' eyes were worse.
Far from her nest the lapwing cries away:
My heart prays for him, though my tongue do curse.

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Here, go; the desk, the purse! sweet, now, make haste.

LUCIANA.

How hast thou lost thy breath?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

By running fast.

ADRIANA.

Where is thy master, Dromio? is he well?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

No, he's in Tartar[1] limbo,[2] worse than hell.
A devil in an everlasting garment[3] hath him;
One whose hard heart is button'd up with steel;
A fiend, a fairy,[4] pitiless and rough;
A wolf, nay, worse,—a fellow all in buff;
A back-friend, a shoulder-clapper,[5] one that countermands
The passages of alleys, creeks, and narrow lands;[6]
A hound that runs counter,[7] and yet draws dry-foot[8] well;
One that, before the judgement, carries poor souls to hell.[9]

ADRIANA.

Why, man, what is the matter?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I do not know the matter: he is 'rested on the case.

---

[1] **Tartar:** Tartarean; infernal. [2] **limbo:** prison. [3] **everlasting garment:** an allusion to the buff-colored uniform of the officer, the same color as a man's skin. [4] **fairy:** goblin. [5] **A back-friend, a shoulder-clapper:** an officer who approaches from the rear to arrest a man by placing his hand on the man's shoulder. [6] **narrow lands:** landing places on the water. [7] **runs counter:** pursues the quarry in the wrong direction. [8] **draws dry-foot:** that is, a bloodhound that is trained to follow man by scent. [9] **hell:** prison.

ADRIANA.

What, is he arrested? tell me at whose suit.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I know not at whose suit he is arrested well;
But is in a suit of buff which 'rested him, that can I tell.
Will you send him, mistress, redemption, the money in his desk?

ADRIANA.

Go fetch it, sister.—This I wonder at, [*Exit* LUCIANA.
That he, unknown to me, should be in debt.—
Tell me, was he arrested on a band? [1]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Not on a band,[2] but on a stronger thing,—
A chain, a chain:—do you not hear it ring?

ADRIANA.

What, the chain?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

No, no, the bell:—'tis time that I were gone:
It was two ere I left him, and now the clock strikes one.

ADRIANA.

The hours come back! that did I never hear.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

O, yes; if any hour meet a sergeant, 'a[3] turns back for very fear.

ADRIANA.

As if Time were in debt! how fondly dost thou reason!

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Time is a very bankrout,[4] and owes more than he's worth to season.[5]

---

[1] **band:** bond.
[2] **band:** neckband.
[3] **'a:** he (it).
[4] **bankrout:** bankrupt.
[5] **season:** opportunity.

Nay, he's a thief too: have you not heard men say,
That Time comes stealing on by night and day?
If Time be in debt and theft, and a sergeant in the way,
Hath he not reason to turn back an hour in a day?

Enter LUCIANA *with the purse.*

ADRIANA.

Go, Dromio; there's the money, bear it straight;
And bring thy master home immediately.—
Come, sister: I am prest down with conceit,[1]—
Conceit, my comfort and my injury. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A public place.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

There's not a man I meet but doth salute me
As if I were their well-acquainted friend;
And every one doth call me by my name.
Some tender money to me; some invite me;
Some other[2] give me thanks for kindnesses;
Some offer me commodities to buy;—
Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop,
And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,
And therewithal took measure of my body.
Sure, these are but imaginary wiles,
And Lapland sorcerers[3] inhabit here.

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Master, here's the gold you sent me for.—What, have you got rid of the picture of old Adam[4] new-apparell'd?

---

[1] **conceit:** fanciful conceptions; imaginings.
[2] **other:** others.
[3] **Lapland sorcerers:** at one time, Lapland was thought to be the home of witches and sorcerers.
[4] **the picture of old Adam:** i.e., the officer who arrested Dromio's master.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What gold is this? what Adam dost thou mean?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Not that Adam that kept the Paradise, but that Adam that keeps the prison: he that goes in the calf's skin that was kill'd for the Prodigal;[1] he that came behind you, sir, like an evil angel, and bid you forsake your liberty.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I understand thee not.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

No? why, 'tis a plain case: he that went, like a base-viol, in a case of leather; the man, sir, that, when gentlemen are tired, gives them a sob,[2] and 'rests[3] them; he, sir, that takes pity on decay'd [4] men, and gives them suits of durance;[5] he that sets up his rest[6] to do more exploits with his mace than a morris-pike.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What, thou mean'st an officer?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Ay, sir, the sergeant of the band; he that brings any man to answer it that breaks his band;[7] one that thinks a man always going to bed, and says, 'God give you good rest!'

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Well, sir, there rest in your foolery. Is there any ship puts forth to-night? may we be gone?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Why, sir, I brought you word an hour since, that the bark Expedition put forth to-night; and then were you hinder'd [8] by

---

[1] **the calf's skin . . . Prodigal:** *see* St. Luke 15:23. [2] **sob:** a moment's rest for a horse to get its wind. [3] **'rests:** arrests. [4] **decay'd:** impoverished. [5] **suits of durance:** prison garb. [6] **sets up his rest:** is confident in his expectation. [7] **band:** bond. [8] **hinder'd:** delayed.

the sergeant, to tarry for the hoy[1] Delay. Here are the angels[2] that you sent for to deliver you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

The fellow is distract,[3] and so am I;
And here we wander in illusions:
Some blessed power deliver us from hence!

Enter a COURTEZAN.

COURTEZAN.

Well met, well met, Master Antipholus.
I see, sir, you have found the goldsmith now:
Is that the chain you promised me to-day?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Satan, avoid![4] I charge thee, tempt me not.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Master, is this Mistress Satan?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

It is the devil.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Nay, she is worse, she is the devil's dam; and here she comes in the habit of a light[5] wench: and thereof comes that the wenches say, 'God damn me;' that's as much as to say, 'God make me a light wench.' It is written, they appear to men like angels of light: light is an affect of fire, and fire will burn; *ergo*, light wenches will burn. Come not near her.

COURTEZAN.

Your man and you are marvellous merry, sir.
Will you go with me? We'll mend our dinner[6] here.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Master, if you do, expect spoon-meat; so bespeak a long spoon.[7]

---

[1] **hoy:** a small ship. [2] **angels:** gold coins worth about 10*s* apiece, with a pun on the usual meaning of *angels*. [3] **distract:** distracted; mad. [4] **avoid:** avaunt; go away. [5] **light:** wanton. [6] **We'll mend our dinner:** we shall make up for the lack of not having our dinner. [7] **bespeak a long spoon:** ask for a long-handled spoon.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Why, Dromio?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Marry, he must have a long spoon that must eat with the devil.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Avoid, thou fiend! what tell'st thou me of supping?
Thou art, as you are all, a sorceress:
I conjure thee to leave me and be gone.

COURTEZAN.

Give me the ring of mine you had at dinner,
Or, for my diamond, the chain you promised;
And I'll be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Some devils ask but the parings of one's nail,
A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin,
A nut, a cherry-stone;
But she, more covetous, would have a chain.
Master, be wise: an if [1] you give it her,
The devil will shake her chain, and fright us with it.

COURTEZAN.

I pray you, sir, my ring, or else the chain:
I hope you do not mean to cheat me so.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Avaunt, thou witch!—Come, Dromio, let us go.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

'Fly pride,' says the peacock:[2] mistress, that you know.

[*Exeunt* ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE *and* DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

COURTEZAN.

Now, out of doubt[3] Antipholus is mad,
Else would he never so demean himself.[4]

---

[1] **an if:** if.

[2] **'Fly pride,' says the peacock:** an allusion to the peacock as a proverbial symbol of pride (vanity).

[3] **out of doubt:** without doubt.

[4] **demean himself:** conduct himself; behave.

A ring he hath of mine worth forty ducats,
And for the same he promised me a chain:
Both one and other he denies me now.
The reason that I gather he is mad,—
Besides this present instance of his rage,—
Is a mad tale he told to-day at dinner,
Of his own doors being shut against his entrance.
Belike[1] his wife, acquainted with his fits,
On purpose shut the doors against his way.[2]
My way is now to hie home to his house,
And tell his wife that, being lunatic,
He rush'd into my house, and took perforce[3]
My ring away. This course I fittest choose;
For forty ducats is too much to lose. [*Exit.*

Scene IV.

A street.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS *and the* OFFICER.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Fear me not, man; I will not break away:
I'll give thee, ere I leave thee, so much money,
To warrant thee, as I am 'rested for.
My wife is in a wayward mood to-day,
And will not lightly trust the messenger:
That I should be attach'd [4] in Ephesus,
I tell you, 'twill sound harshly in her ears—
Here comes my man; I think he brings the money.

Enter DROMIO OF EPHESUS *with a rope's-end.*

How now, sir! have you that I sent you for?

---

[1] **Belike:** probably.
[2] **way:** admittance; passage.
[3] **perforce:** by force.
[4] **attach'd:** arrested.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Here's that, I warrant you, will pay[1] them all.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

But where's the money?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Why, sir, I gave the money for the rope.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Five hundred ducats, villain, for a rope?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

I'll serve you, sir, five hundred at the rate.[2]

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

To what end did I bid thee hie thee home?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

To a rope's-end, sir; and to that end am I return'd.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

And to that end, sir, I will welcome you. [*Beating him.*

OFFICER.

Good sir, be patient.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Nay, 'tis for me to be patient; I am in adversity.

OFFICER.

Good, now,[3] hold thy tongue.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Nay, rather persuade him to hold his hands.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Thou whoreson, senseless villain!

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

I would I were senseless, sir, that I might not feel your blows.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Thou art sensible[4] in nothing but blows, and so is an ass.

---

[1] **pay:** correct.

[2] **at the rate:** that is, at the cost of one rope per ducat.

[3] **Good, now:** I pray you.

[4] **sensible:** sensitive.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

I am an ass, indeed; you may prove it by my long ears.[1]—I have served him from the hour of my nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his hands for my service but blows. When I am cold, he heats me with beating; when I am warm, he cools me with beating; I am waked with it when I sleep; raised with it when I sit; driven out of doors with it when I go from home; welcomed home with it when I return: nay, I bear it on my shoulders, as a beggar wont[2] her brat; and, I think, when he hath lamed me, I shall beg with it from door to door.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Come, go along; my wife is coming yonder.

Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, *the* COURTEZAN, *and a schoolmaster call'd* PINCH.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Mistress, *respice finem*, respect[3] your end;—or rather, the prophecy like the parrot, 'Beware the rope's-end.'

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Wilt thou still talk? [*Beating him.*

COURTEZAN.

How say you now? is not your husband mad?

ADRIANA.

His incivility confirms no less.—
Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer;
Establish him in his true sense again,
And I will please[4] you what you will demand.

LUCIANA.

Alas, how fiery and how sharp he looks!

---

[1] **by my long ears:** that is, by my ears which have been lengthened by your frequent boxing of them.
[2] **wont:** is accustomed to bear.
[3] **respect:** consider.
[4] **please:** pay.

COURTEZAN.

Mark how he trembles in his ecstasy! [1]

PINCH.

Give me your hand, and let me feel your pulse.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

There is my hand, and let it feel your ear. [*Striking him.*

PINCH.

I charge thee, Satan, housed within this man,
To yield possession to my holy prayers,
And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight;
I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven!

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Peace, doting wizard, peace! I am not mad.

ADRIANA.

O, that thou wert not, poor distressed soul!

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

You minion, you, are these your customers? [2]
Did this companion[3] with the saffron[4] face
Revel and feast it at my house to-day,
Whilst upon me the guilty doors were shut,
And I denied to enter in my house?

ADRIANA.

O husband, God doth know you dined at home;
Where would you had remain'd until this time,
Free from these slanders[5] and this open shame!

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Dined at home!—Thou villain, what sayest thou?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Sir, sooth to say,[6] you did not dine at home.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Were not my doors lockt up, and I shut out?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Perdy,[7] your doors were lockt, and you shut out.

---

[1] **ecstasy:** madness. [2] **customers:** guests. [3] **companion:** fellow. [4] **saffron:** sallow; yellow. [5] **slanders:** words of disgrace. [6] **sooth to say:** truth to tell. [7] **Perdy:** *pardieu;* truly.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

And did not she herself revile me there?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Sans[1] fable, she herself reviled you there.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Did not her kitchen-maid rail, taunt, and scorn me?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Certes,[2] she did; the kitchen-vestal [3] scorn'd ye.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

And did not I in rage depart from thence?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

In verity you did;—my bones bear witness,
That since have felt the vigour of his rage.

ADRIANA.

Is't good to soothe[4] him in these contraries? [5]

PINCH.

It is no shame: the fellow finds his vein,
And, yielding to him, humours well his frenzy.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Thou hast subom'd the goldsmith to arrest me.

ADRIANA.

Alas, I sent you money to redeem you,
By Dromio here, who came in haste for it.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Money by me! heart and good-will you might;
But surely, master, not a rag[6] of money.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Went'st not thou to her for a purse of ducats?

ADRIANA.

He came to me, and I deliver'd it.

LUCIANA.

And I am witness with her that she did.

---

[1] **Sans:** without. [2] **Certes:** in truth. [3] **kitchen-vestal:** "her charge being, like that of the vestal virgin, to keep the fire burning" —Johnson. [4] **soothe:** humor. [5] **contraries:** misapprehensions; lies. [6] **a rag:** a farthing.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

God and the rope-maker bear me witness
That I was sent for nothing but a rope!

PINCH [*aside to* ADRIANA].

Mistress, both man and master is possest;[1]
I know it by their pale and deadly[2] looks:
They must be bound, and laid in some dark room.[3]

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Say, wherefore didst thou lock me forth to-day—
And why dost thou deny the bag of gold?

ADRIANA.

I did not, gentle husband, lock thee forth.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

And, gentle master, I received no gold;
But I confess, sir, that we were lockt out.

ADRIANA.

Dissembling villain, thou speak'st false in both.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Dissembling harlot, thou art false in all;
And art confederate with a damned pack
To make a loathsome abject scorn of me:
But with these nails I'll pluck out those false eyes,
That would behold in me this shameful sport.

ADRIANA.

O, bind him, bind him! let him not come near me.

PINCH.

More company!—The fiend is strong within him.

COURTEZAN.

Ay me, poor man, how pale and wan he looks!

Enter three or four, and offer to bind him; he strives.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

What, will you murder me?—Thou gaoler, thou,
I am thy prisoner: wilt thou suffer them
To make a rescue? [4]

---

[1] **possest:** possessed of the devil; mad.
[2] **deadly:** deathly.
[3] **bound . . . dark room:** an old-time treatment for madness.
[4] **To make a rescue:** to take me from your official custody.

OFFICER.

Masters, let him go:
He is my prisoner, and you shall not have him.

PINCH.

Go bind this man, for he is frantic[1] too.

[*They bind* DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

ADRIANA.

What wilt thou do, thou peevish[2] officer?
Hast thou delight to see a wretched man
Do outrage and displeasure to himself?

OFFICER.

He is my prisoner: if I let him go,
The debt he owes will be required of me.

ADRIANA.

I will discharge[3] thee ere I go from thee:
Bear me forthwith unto his creditor,
And, knowing how the debt grows,[4] I will pay it.—
Good master doctor, see him safe convey'd
Home to my house.—O most unhappy day!

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

O most unhappy[5] strumpet!

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Master, I am here enter'd in bond for you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Out on thee, villain! wherefore dost thou mad[6] me?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Will you be bound for nothing? be mad, good master; cry, 'The devil!'

LUCIANA.

God help, poor souls, how idly[7] do they talk!

---

[1] **frantic:** mad; insane. [2] **peevish:** foolish. [3] **discharge:** pay. [4] **grows:** arises. [5] **unhappy:** mischievous. [6] **mad:** madden; anger. [7] **idly:** *foolishly.*

ADRIANA.

Go bear him hence.—Sister, go you with me.

[*Exeunt* PINCH *and* ASSISTANTS, *with* ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS *and* DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Say now whose suit is he arrested at?

OFFICER.

One Angelo, a goldsmith: do you know him?

ADRIANA.

I know the man. What is the sum he owes?

OFFICER.

Two hundred ducats.

ADRIANA.

Say, how grows it due?

OFFICER.

Due for a chain your husband had of him.

ADRIANA.

He did bespeak a chain for me, but had it not.

COURTEZAN.

Whenas[1] your husband, all in rage, to-day
Came to my house, and took away my ring,—
The ring I saw upon his finger now,—
Straight after did I meet him with a chain.

ADRIANA.

It may be so, but I did never see it.—
Come, gaoler, bring me where the goldsmith is:
I long to know the truth hereof at large.[2]

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE *with his rapier drawn, and* DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

LUCIANA.

God, for thy mercy! they are loose again.

ADRIANA.

And come with naked swords. Let's call more help,
To have them bound again.

---

[1] **Whenas:** when.
[2] **at large:** in full.

OFFICER.

Away! they'll kill us.

[*Exeunt* ADRIANA, *&c., as fast as may be, frighted.*

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I see these witches are afraid of swords.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

She that would be your wife now ran from you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Come to the Centaur; fetch our stuff [1] from thence:
I long that we were safe and sound aboard.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Faith, stay here this night; they will surely do us no harm: you saw they speak us fair,[2] give us gold: methinks they are such a gentle nation, that, but for the mountain of mad flesh that claims marriage of me, I could find in my heart to stay here still, and turn witch.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I will not stay to-night for all the town;
Therefore away, to get our stuff aboard. [*Exeunt.*

---

[1] **our stuff:** our baggage.
[2] **speak us fair:** speak kindly to us.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT 5

ACT FIVE

THE GOLDSMITH and his friend encounter the uneasy Syracusans and accuse Antipholus of fraudulent deceit. Adriana and her group arrive, too—to chase the Syracusans into seeking sanctuary in an adjacent priory. The abbess emerges and in the course of her inquiries, has Adriana indict herself for her jealous rages. The abbess refuses to surrender the "lunatics" until they have had some careful nursing, and returns to the abbey. Adriana is insistent—she wants her husband back. She appeals to the Duke, just then passing by with the execution party; it is five o'clock and the old merchant's life is forfeit. Adriana's exaggerated account of her husband's aberrances is interrupted by his entrance—while he is supposed to be in refuge in the abbey! Now the husband launches his counter-charges and the confusion mounts. Aegeon happily thinks he sees the son who left Syracuse seven years ago. The Ephesian Antipholus, of course, denies the old man, to Aegeon's greater sorrow. It is the return of the abbess with the Syracusan pair that sorts matters out. The abbess is Aegeon's long-lost wife; husband is restored to wife and brother to brother. The final comic touch is the relief of Dromio of Syracuse when he discovers that fat Nell of the kitchen is to be only his sister-in-law.

ACT V. Scene I.

Before an abbey.

Enter SECOND MERCHANT *and* ANGELO.

ANGELO.

I am sorry, sir, that I have hinder'd you;
But, I protest, he had the chain of me,
Though most dishonestly he doth deny it.

SECOND MERCHANT.

How is the man esteem'd here in the city?

ANGELO.

Of very reverend reputation, sir,
Of credit infinite, highly beloved,

Second to none that lives here in the city:
His word might bear my wealth at any time.[1]

SECOND MERCHANT.

Speak softly: yonder, as I think, he walks.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE *and* DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

ANGELO.

'Tis so; and that self [2] chain about his neck,
Which he forswore most monstrously to have.
Good sir, draw near to me, I'll speak to him.—
Signior Antipholus, I wonder much
That you would put me to this shame and trouble;
And, not without some scandal to yourself,
With circumstance and oaths[3] so to deny
This chain, which now you wear so openly:
Beside the charge,[4] the shame, imprisonment,
You have done wrong to this my honest friend;
Who, but for staying on our controversy,
Had hoisted sail and put to sea to-day:
This chain you had of me; can you deny it?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I think I had; I never did deny it.

SECOND MERCHANT.

Yes, that you did, sir, and forswore it too.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Who heard me to deny it or forswear it?

SECOND MERCHANT.

These ears of mine, thou know'st, did hear thee:
Fie on thee, wretch! 'tis pity that thou livest
To walk where any honest men resort.[5]

---

[1] **His word . . . time:** His word is sufficient for me to pledge all my wealth on it.
[2] **self:** selfsame; same.
[3] **circumstance and oaths:** sworn particulars (details).
[4] **charge:** expense.
[5] **resort:** consort; get together.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Thou art a villain to impeach me thus:
I'll prove mine honour and mine honesty
Against thee presently, if thou darest stand.

SECOND MERCHANT.

I dare, and do defy thee for a villain. [*They draw.*

Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, *the* COURTEZAN, *and others.*

ADRIANA.

Hold, hurt him not, for God's sake! he is mad.—
Some get within him,[1] take his sword away:
Bind Dromio too, and bear them to my house.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Run, master, run; for God's sake, take a house![2]
This is some priory:[3]—in, or we are spoil'd.[4]

[*Exeunt* ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE *and* DROMIO OF SYRACUSE *to the abbey.*

Enter LADY ABBESS.

ABBESS.

Be quiet, people. Wherefore throng you hither?

ADRIANA.

To fetch my poor distracted husband hence.
Let us come in, that we may bind him fast,
And bear him home for his recovery.

ANGELO.

I knew he was not in his perfect wits.

SECOND MERCHANT.

I am sorry now that I did draw on him.

ABBESS.

How long hath this possession held the man?

ADRIANA.

This week he hath been heavy,[5] sour, sad,[6]
And much different from the man he was;

---

[1] **get within him:** grapple with him.
[2] **take a house:** go into a house.
[3] **priory:** religious house.
[4] **spoil'd:** ruined; lost.
[5] **heavy:** melancholy.
[6] **sad:** serious.

But till this afternoon his passion[1]
Ne'er brake into extremity of rage.

ABBESS.

Hath he not lost much wealth by wrack of sea? [2]
Buried some dear friend? Hath not else his eye
Stray'd [3] his affection in unlawful love,—
A sin prevailing much in youthful men,
Who give their eyes the liberty of gazing?
Which of these sorrows is he subject to?

ADRIANA.

To none of these, except it be the last;
Namely, some love that drew him oft from home.

ABBESS.

You should for that have reprehended him.

ADRIANA.

Why, so I did.

ABBESS.

Ay, but not rough enough.

ADRIANA.

As roughly as my modesty would let me.

ABBESS.

Haply, in private.

ADRIANA.

And in assemblies too.

ABBESS.

Ay, but not enough.

ADRIANA.

It was the copy of our conference:[4]
In bed, he slept not for my urging it;
At board, he fed not for my urging[5] it;
Alone, it was the subject of my theme;
In company I often glanced it;[6]
Still [7] did I tell him it was vile and bad.

---

[1] **passion:** madness. [2] **wrack of sea:** shipwreck. [3] **Stray'd:** led astray. [4] **the copy of our conference:** the subject (theme) of our conversations. [5] **urging:** mentioning; talking about. [6] **glanced it:** hinted at it. [7] **Still:** always.

ABBESS.

And thereof came it that the man was mad:
The venom-clamours of a jealous woman
Poisons more deadly than a mad-dog's tooth.
It seems his sleeps[1] were hinder'd by thy railing:
And thereof comes it that his head is light.
Thou say'st his meat was sauced with thy upbraidings:
Unquiet meals make ill digestions,—
Thereof the raging fire of fever bred;
And what's a fever but a fit of madness?
Thou say'st his sports[2] were hinder'd by thy brawls:
Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue
But moody and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair;
And at her heels a huge infectious troop
Of pale distemperatures[3] and foes to life?
In food, in sport, and life-preserving rest
To be disturb'd, would mad [4] or man or[5] beast:
The consequence is, then, thy jealous fits
Have scared thy husband from the use of wits.

LUCIANA.

She never reprehended him but mildly,
When he demean'd himself rough-rude and wildly.—
Why bear you these rebukes, and answer not?

ADRIANA.

She did betray me to my own reproof.—[6]
Good people, enter, and lay hold on him.

ABBESS.

No, not a creature enters in my house.

ADRIANA.

Then let your servants bring my husband forth.

---

[1] **sleeps:** slumbers.
[2] **sports:** pleasures.
[3] **distemperatures:** physical disorders.
[4] **mad:** madden.
[5] **or . . . or:** either . . . or.
[6] **betray . . . reproof:** reveal my own fault to me.

ABBESS.

Neither: he took this place for sanctuary,
And it shall privilege him from your hands
Till I have brought him to his wits again,
Or lose my labour in assaying[1] it.

ADRIANA.

I will attend my husband, be his nurse,
Diet his sickness,[2] for it is my office,[3]
And will have no attorney[4] but myself;
And therefore let me have him home with me.

ABBESS.

Be patient; for I will not let him stir
Till I have used the approved [5] means I have,
With wholesome syrups, drugs, and holy prayers,
To make of him a formal [6] man again:
It is a branch and parcel [7] of mine oath,
A charitable duty of my order.
Therefore depart, and leave him here with me.

ADRIANA.

I will not hence,[8] and leave my husband here:
And ill it doth beseem[9] your holiness
To separate the husband and the wife.

ABBESS.

Be quiet, and depart: thou shalt not have him. [*Exit.*

LUCIANA.

Complain unto the duke of this indignity.

ADRIANA.

Come, go: I will fall prostrate at his feet,
And never rise until my tears and prayers
Have won his grace to come in person hither,
And take perforce[10] my husband from the abbess.

---

[1] **assaying:** trying. [2] **Diet his sickness:** cure his illness by prescribed rules and medications. [3] **office:** duty. [4] **attorney:** agent. [5] **approved:** proved; tested. [6] **formal:** normal; rational. [7] **branch and parcel:** part. [8] **hence:** go. [9] **beseem:** become; befit. [10] **perforce:** by force.

SECOND MERCHANT.

By this, I think, the dial points at five:
Anon, I'm sure, the duke himself in person
Comes this way to the melancholy vale,
The place of death and sorry[1] execution,
Behind the ditches of the abbey here.

ANGELO.

Upon what cause?

SECOND MERCHANT.

To see a reverend Syracusian merchant,
Who put unluckily into this bay
Against the laws and statutes of this town,
Beheaded publicly for his offence.

ANGELO.

See where they come: we will behold his death.

LUCIANA.

Kneel to the duke before he pass the abbey.

Enter DUKE, *attended;* AEGEON *bareheaded; with the* HEADSMAN *and other* OFFICERS.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Yet once again proclaim it publicly,
If any friend will pay the sum for him,
He shall not die, so much we tender[2] him.

ADRIANA.

Justice, most sacred duke, against the abbess!

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

She is a virtuous and a reverend lady:
It cannot be that she hath done thee wrong.

ADRIANA.

May it please your grace, Antipholus my husband,—
Who I made lord of me and all I had,
At your important[3] letters,—this ill day

---

[1] **sorry:** sorrowful.
[2] **tender:** offer.
[3] **important:** importunate; urgent.

A most outrageous fit of madness took him;
That desp'rately he hurried through the street,—
With him his bondman, all as mad as he,—
Doing displeasure to the citizens
By rushing in their houses, bearing thence
Rings, jewels, any thing his rage did like.
Once did I get him bound, and sent him home,
Whilst to take order for[1] the wrongs I went,
That here and there his fury had committed.
Anon, I wot[2] not by what strong escape
He broke from those that had the guard of him;
And both his mad attendant and himself,
Each one with ireful passion, with drawn swords,
Met us again, and, madly bent on us,
Chased us away; till, raising of more aid,
We came again to bind them. Then they fled
Into this abbey, whither we pursued them;
And here the abbess shuts the gates on us,
And will not suffer us to fetch him out,
Nor send him forth, that we may bear him hence.
Therefore, most gracious duke, with thy command
Let him be brought forth, and borne hence for help.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Long since thy husband served me in my wars;
And I to thee engaged a prince's word,
When thou didst make him master of thy bed,
To do him all the grace and good I could.—
Go, some of you, knock at the abbey-gate,
And bid the lady abbess come to me.—
I will determine[3] this before I stir.

---

[1] **to take order for:** to take measure for settling.
[2] **wot:** know.
[3] **determine:** resolve.

Enter a SERVANT.

SERVANT.

O mistress, mistress, shift[1] and save yourself!
My master and his man are both broke loose,
Beaten the maids a-row,[2] and bound the doctor,
Whose beard they have singed off with brands of fire;
And ever, as it blazed, they threw on him
Great pails of puddled mire to quench the hair:
My master preaches patience to him, and the while
His man with scissors nicks him like a fool;[3]
And sure, unless you send some present[4] help,
Between them they will kill the conjurer.

ADRIANA.

Peace, fool! thy master and his man are here;
And that is false thou dost report to us.

SERVANT.

Mistress, upon my life, I tell you true;
I have not breathed almost since I did see it.
He cries for you, and vows, if he can take you,
To scorch[5] your face, and to disfigure you. [*Cry within.*
Hark, hark! I hear him, mistress: fly, be gone!

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Come, stand by me; fear nothing.—Guard with halberds![6]

ADRIANA.

Ay me, it is my husband! Witness you,
That he is borne about invisible:
Even now we housed him in the abbey here;
And now he's there, past thought of human reason.[7]

---

[1] **shift:** fly. [2] **a-row:** one after the other. [3] **nicks . . . fool:** cuts his hair jaggedly, like the hair of an idiot or a fool. [4] **present:** immediate. [5] **scorch:** perhaps a misprint for *scratch*—to cut. [6] **halberds:** weapons resembling long-handled axes. [7] **past . . . reason:** contrary to human belief.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS *and* DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Justice, most gracious duke, O, grant me justice!
Even for the service that long since I did thee,
When I bestrid thee[1] in the wars, and took
Deep scars to save thy life; even for the blood
That then I lost for thee, now grant me justice.

AEGEON.

Unless the fear of death doth make me dote,[2]
I see my son Antipholus, and Dromio.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Justice, sweet prince, against that woman there!
She whom thou gavest to me to be my wife,
That hath abused and dishonour'd me
Even in the strength and height of injury:[3]
Beyond imagination is the wrong
That she this day hath shameless thrown on me.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Discover[4] how, and thou shalt find me just.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

This day, great duke, she shut the doors upon me,
While she with harlots[5] feasted in my house.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

A grievous fault.—Say, woman, didst thou so?

ADRIANA.

No, my good lord: myself, he, and my sister,
To-day did dine together. So befall my soul
As this is false he burdens me withal!

LUCIANA.

Ne'er may I look on'day, nor sleep on night,[6]
But she tells to your highness simple truth!

---

[1] **bestrid thee:** stood over your fallen body to protect you.
[2] **dote:** weak-minded.
[3] **Even . . . injury:** to the utmost limit.
[4] **Discover:** reveal.
[5] **harlots:** confederates in cheating.
[6] **on night:** at night.

ANGELO.

O perjured woman!—They are both forsworn:
In this the madman justly chargeth them.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

My liege, I am advised what I say;[1]
Neither disturb'd with the effect of wine,
Nor heady-rash, provoked with raging ire,
Albeit my wrongs might make one wiser mad.
This woman lockt me out this day from dinner:
That goldsmith there, were he not pack'd[2] with her,
Could witness it, for he was with me then;
Who parted with me to go fetch a chain,
Promising to bring it to the Porpentine,
Where Balthazar and I did dine together.
Our dinner done, and he not coming thither,
I went to seek him: in the street I met him,
And in his company that gentleman.
There did this perjured goldsmith swear me down
That I this day of him received the chain,
Which, God he knows, I saw not: for the which
He did arrest me with an officer
I did obey; and sent my peasant[3] home
For certain ducats: he with none return'd.
Then fairly I bespoke the officer
To go in person with me to my house.
By th' way we met
My wife, her sister, and a rabble more
Of vile confederates. Along with them
They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean-faced villain,
A mere anatomy,[4] a mountebank,
A threadbare juggler, and a fortune-teller,
A needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch,
A living-dead man: this pernicious slave,
Forsooth, took on him as a conjurer;[5]

---

[1] **I am advised what I say:** I am not going to speak ill-advisedly, but on due deliberation.
[2] **pack'd:** in league.
[3] **peasant:** servant.
[4] **anatomy:** skeleton.
[5] **took on . . . conjurer:** pretended to be an expeller of evil spirits.

And, gazing in mine eyes, feeling my pulse,
And with no face, as 'twere, outfacing me,
Cries out, I was possest. Then all together
They fell upon me, bound me, bore me thence,
And in a dark and dankish vault at home
There left me and my man, both bound together;
Till, gnawing with my teeth my bonds in sunder,[1]
I gain'd my freedom, and immediately
Ran hither to your grace; whom I beseech
To give me ample satisfaction
For these deep shames and great indignities.

ANGELO.

My lord, in truth, thus far I witness with him,
That he dined not at home, but was lockt out.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

But had he such a chain of thee or no?

ANGELO.

He had, my lord: and when he ran in here,
These people saw the chain about his neck.

SECOND MERCHANT.

Besides, I will be sworn these ears of mine
Heard you confess you had the chain of him,
After you first forswore[2] it on the mart:
And thereupon I drew my sword on you;
And then you fled into this abbey here,
From whence, I think, you are come by miracle.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I never came within these abbey-walls;
Nor ever didst thou draw thy sword on me:
I never saw the chain, so help me heaven
And this is false you burden me withal! [3]

---

[1] **in sunder:** asunder.
[2] **forswore:** denied.
[3] **And . . . withal:** and everything you charge me with is untrue.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Why, what an intricate impeach[1] is this!
I think you all have drunk of Circe's cup.[2]
If here you housed him, here he would have been;
If he were mad, he would not plead so coldly:[3]—
You say he dined at home; the goldsmith here
Denies that saying.—Sirrah, what say you?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Sīr, he dined with her there, at the Porpentine.

COURTEZAN.

He did; and from my finger snatcht that ring.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

'Tis true, my liege; this ring I had of her.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Saw'st thou him enter at the abbey here?

COURTEZAN.

As sure, my liege, as I do see your grace.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Why, this is strange.—Go call the abbess hither.—
[*Exit one to the* ABBESS.
I think you are all mated [4] or stark mad.

AEGEON.

Most mighty duke, vouchsafe me speak a word:
Haply[5] I see a friend will save my life,
And pay the sum that may deliver me.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Speak freely, Syracusian, what thou wilt.

AEGEON.

Is not your name, sir, call'd Antipholus?
And is not that your bondman Dromio?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Within this hour I was his bondman, sir,

---

[1] **impeach:** accusation.
[2] **Circe's cup:** a drink from Circe's cup was supposed to turn men into beasts (Homer's *Odyssey*).
[3] **coldly:** calmly; dispassionately.
[4] **mated:** confounded.
[5] **Haply:** perchance.

But he, I thank him, gnaw'd in two my cords:
Now am I Dromio, and his man unbound.

AEGEON.

I am sure you both of you remember me.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Ourselves we do remember, sir, by you;
For lately we were bound, as you are now.
You are not Pinch's patient, are you, sir?

AEGEON.

Why look you strange on me? you know me well.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I never saw you in my life till now.

AEGEON.

O, grief hath changed me since you saw me last,
And careful [1] hours with Time's deformed [2] hand
Have written strange defeatures[3] in my face:
But tell me yet, dost thou not know my voice?

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Neither.

AEGEON.

Dromio, nor thou?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

No, trust me, sir, nor I.

AEGEON.

I am sure thou dost.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Ay, sir, but I am sure I do not; and whatsoever a man denies, you are now bound to believe him.

AEGEON.

Not know my voice! O time's extremity,

---

[1] **careful:** full of care.
[2] **deformed:** deforming.
[3] **defeatures:** disfigurements.

Hast thou so crack'd and splitted my poor tongue
In seven short years, that here my only son
Knows not my feeble key of untuned cares? [1]
Though now this grained face[2] of mine be hid
In sap-consuming winter's drizzled snow,
And all the conduits[3] of my blood froze up,
Yet hath my night of life[4] some memory,
My wasting lamps[5] some fading glimmer left,
My dull deaf ears a little use to hear:[6]
All these old witnesses—I cannot err—
Tell me thou art my son Antipholus.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I never saw my father in my life.

AEGEON.

But seven years since, in Syracusa, boy,
Thou know'st we parted: but perhaps, my son,
Thou shamest to acknowledge me in misery.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

The duke, and all that know me in the city,
Can witness with me that it is not so:
I ne'er saw Syracusa in my life.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

I tell thee, Syracusian, twenty years
Have I been patron to Antipholus,
During which time he ne'er saw Syracusa:
I see thy age and dangers make thee dote.

Enter ABBESS, *with* ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE *and* DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

ABBESS.

Most mighty duke, behold a man much wrong'd.

[*All gather to see them.*

---

[1] **my feeble key . . . cares:** "the weak and discordant tune of my voice, that is changed by grief"—Douce. [2] **grained face:** furrowed face—like the grain in wood. [3] **conduits:** channels. [4] **night of life:** old age. [5] **wasting lamps:** dim eyes. [6] **to hear:** of hearing.

ADRIANA.

I see two husbands, or mine eyes deceive me.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

One of these men is Genius[1] to the other;
And so[2] of these. Which is the natural man,
And which the spirit? who deciphers[3] them?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

I, sir, am Dromio: command him away.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

I, sir, am Dromio: pray, let me stay.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Aegeon art thou not? or else his ghost?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

O, my old master! who hath bound him here?

ABBESS.

Whoever bound him, I will loose his bonds,
And gain a husband by his liberty.—
Speak, old Aegeon, if thou be'st the man
That hadst a wife once call'd Aemilia,
That bore thee at a burden[4] two fair sons:
O, if thou be'st the same Aegeon, speak,
And speak unto the same Aemilia!

AEGEON.

If I dream not, thou art Aemilia:
If thou art she, tell me where is that son
That floated with thee on the fatal raft?

ABBESS.

By men of Epidamnum he and I
And the twin Dromio all were taken up;
But by and by rude fishermen of Corinth
By force took Dromio and my son from them,
And me they left with those of Epidamnum.
What then became of them I cannot tell;
I to this fortune that you see me in.

---

[1] **Genius:** guardian spirit.
[2] **so:** so also.
[3] **deciphers:** distinguishes.
[4] **at a burden:** at one bearing of children.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Why, here begins his morning story right:
These two Antipholus', these two so like,
And these two Dromios, one in semblance,—
Besides her urging of [1] her wrack at sea,—
These are the parents to these children,
Which accidentally are met together.—
Antipholus, thou camest from Corinth first?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

No, sir, not I; I came from Syracuse.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

Stay, stand apart; I know not which is which.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

I came from Corinth, my most gracious lord,—

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

And I with him.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Brought to this town by that most famous warrior,
Duke Menaphon, your most renowned uncle.

ADRIANA.

Which of you two did dine with me to-day?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I, gentle mistress.

ADRIANA.

And are not you my husband?

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

No; I say nay to that.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

And so do I; yet did she call me so:
And this fair gentlewoman, her sister here,
Did call me brother.—[*to* LUCIANA] What I told you then,

---

[1] **urging of:** mentioning.

I hope I shall have leisure to make good;[1]
If this be not a dream I see and hear.

ANGELO.

That is the chain, sir, which you had of me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

I think it be, sir; I deny it not.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

And you, sir, for this chain arrested me.

ANGELO.

I think I did, sir; I deny it not.

ADRIANA.

I sent you money, sir, to be your bail,
By Dromio; but I think he brought it not.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

No, none by me.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

This purse of ducats I received from you,
And Dromio my man did bring them me.
I see we still [2] did meet each other's man;
And I was ta'en[3] for him, and he for me;
And thereupon these errors are arose.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

These ducats pawn[4] I for my father here.

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

It shall not need,[5] thy father hath his life.

COURTEZAN.

Sir, I must have that diamond from you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

There, take it; and much thanks for my good cheer.

ABBESS.

Renowned duke, vouchsafe to take the pains
To go with us into the abbey here,

---

[1] **to make good:** to prove.
[2] **still:** always.
[3] **ta'en:** taken; mistaken.
[4] **pawn:** pledge.
[5] **It shall not need:** there is no need of a pledge.

And hear at large discoursed all our fortunes;—
And all that are assembled in this place,
That by this sympathized [1] one day's error
Have suffer'd wrong, go keep us company,
And we shall make full satisfaction.—
Thirty-three years[2] have I but gone in travail
Of you, my sons; and, till this present hour,
My heavy burden ne'er delivered.—
The duke, my husband, and my children both,
And you the calendars of their nativity,[3]
Go to a gossip's feast,[4] and joy with me;
After so long grief, such felicity!

DUKE OF EPHESUS.

With all my heart, I'll gossip at this feast.

[*Exeunt* DUKE, ABBESS, AEGEON, COURTEZAN, SECOND MERCHANT, ANGELO, *and* ATTENDANTS.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Máster, shall I fetch your stuff from shipboard?

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS.

Dromio, what stuff of mine hast thou embarkt?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Your goods that lay at host,[5] sir, in the Centaur.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

He speaks to me.—I am your master, Dromio:
Come, go with us; we'll look to that anon:
Embrace thy brother there; rejoice with him.

[*Exeunt* ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE *and* ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS, ADRIANA *and* LUCIANA.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

There is a fat friend at your master's house,

---

[1] **sympathized:** shared. [2] **Thirty-three years:** twenty-five years (one of Shakespeare's inconsistencies). [3] **the calendars . . . nativity:** i.e., the two servants who were born on the same day as the other two men. [4] **gossip's feast:** christening feast; a gossip was a godparent or sponsor. [5] **lay at host:** were checked (at the Centaur).

That kitchen'd me[1] for you to-day at dinner:
She now shall be my sister, not my wife.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Methinks you are my glass,[2] and not my brotner:
I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth.
Will you walk in to see their gossiping? [3]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Not I, sir; you are my elder.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

That's a question: how shall we try[4] it?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

We'll draw cuts[5] for the senior: till then lead thou first.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Nay, then, thus:—
We came into the world like brother and brother;
And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another.

[*Exeunt.*

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[1] **kitchen'd me:** entertained me in the kitchen.
[2] **glass:** mirror.
[3] **gossiping:** merrymaking.
[4] **try:** determine.
[5] **cuts:** lots.

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